

A STUDY OF SELF-PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES TO COMMUNICATION DENIAL

by

Sarah E. Brumback  
B.S., University of Kansas, 1970

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Redacted Signature

Instructor in Charge

Redacted Signature

For the Department

## DEDICATION

This Master's thesis is dedicated to J.P. Henry, without whose concern and encouragement this thesis would never have been finished.

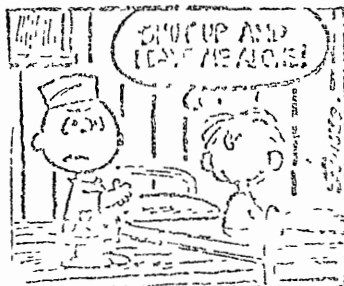
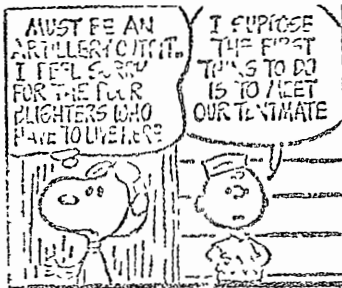
It is also dedicated to Professor Kim Giffin, whose help and advice was much appreciated, as well as members of the thesis advisory committee.

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Many thanks are extended to those people too numerous to name whose assistance has not been forgotten.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

#### I. Introduction

One communication problem which has received recent attention is that of communication denial. Kim Giffin conceptualized this problem, and Barbara Groginsky has developed a scale which measures amount of perceived communication denial. Research by Giffin and Groginsky has established that a high correlation exists between communication denial and social alienation. Social alienation of people is perhaps the focal problem in contemporary society; increased population, automation, and mechanization plus ever-widening communication gaps between generations and cultures are often held responsible for our alienated society. Thus, it seems logical and also necessary to further examine one of the possible causes of social alienation--communication denial. Because social alienation often leads to psychological alienation and ensuing mental problems, research about communication denial may also contribute much to the area of mental health. Finally, dissent and unrest on campuses is constantly increasing; research into the area of communication denial might provide suggestions as to why violence is the currently favored mode of dissent. Thus, research into communication denial may provide worthwhile contributions to the areas of communication, psychology, sociology, and social problems. Communication denial is definitely an important social problem; adequate means of alleviating and coping with this problem are urgently needed. Hope-

fully, my research in this area will provide a better understanding of the entire problem.

## II. Statement of the Problem

Ultimately, the research problem of this thesis is to assess what different people choose as appropriate responses to certain situations of communication denial. For instance, do activists and conservative college students view violence as an appropriate response to faculty denial of student communication? Do parents and faculty concur that less violent responses are more appropriate? Do varying groups of people view different or similar responses to the same situation as most appropriate? To my knowledge, no comprehensive research on this subject has been done. Possibly a common ground exists between the beliefs of different groups; for example, perhaps between beliefs of a conservative or a radical student group. Certainly what is needed is to find a common ground, if one exists, and to use this area as a basis for facilitation of communication.

In view of time and scope limitations of a thesis project, I have focused my research question as follows: What do average college students consider as appropriate responses to varying situations of communication denial? Data about denial responses should be valuable to college administrators, faculty, parents, students, or anyone concerned about dissent on campuses today. However, before logical generalizations and predictions about the average student's behavior are possible, empirical data is a necessity. My aim is to develop an inventory which will measure and predict the frequencies of certain responses to vary-

ing situations of communication denial. In addition, the inventory should describe the attitudes of students concerning appropriateness of responses as well as indicate behavioral tendencies. A problem to be attacked later is that of observer-validation of an introspective scale such as I have developed; the researcher must take the subject's word for validity of his responses until validity can be established by observation or by other techniques.

### III. Theoretical Background and Conceptualization

#### Conceptualization of Communication Denial

Kim Giffin has conceptualized the problem of communication denial for the first time; many attempts had previously been made to isolate the problem but it had not been named or described as such. I have arbitrarily selected his definition of communication denial as suitable for this thesis: "When two (or more) people are together and one of them attempts to initiate communication, the other(s) ignore or refuse to recognize this attempt, i.e., they behave as if no communication attempt has occurred (Giffin, 1971, Quarterly Journal of Speech, pp. 347-358)." This definition establishes several criteria which must be met before the problem can be identified as communication denial. First, denial always occurs in an interpersonal communication setting. Denial could not occur in an intrapersonal setting simply because it is impossible for a person to ignore his own private communication. Someone else must behave as if no communication attempt has occurred in order to constitute communication denial. Another criteria for the

occurrence of denial is that communication must be initiated by one or more persons involved in the interaction. An unspoken request or comment can hardly be ignored; some form of communication must be initiated, whether verbal or nonverbal. Another criteria of denial is that as long as denial is perceived by the initiator of communication, he will respond to the perceived denial regardless of whether it has actually occurred or not. The intent of the person denying the communication is not crucial in this definition. Denial is still perceived regardless of whether the denier intended it or not. Finally, denial is not a mere disagreement but is a refusal to recognize a communication attempt. Denial is not directed toward the communication content (the message) but rather toward the act of communication itself.

Giffin also describes four forms of communication denial; each form involves a basic element of the communication process. First is that we communicate on two levels, the denotative and the connotative. That is, we send messages that provide information; these messages are usually presented through the medium of language. We also provide other communicative cues, verbal and nonverbal, which are further indications of the meaning of the communication. Vocal inflections, tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures are only a few of the possible cues. These cues are called "metacommunication" by Ruesch and Bateson (1957). Communication denial may occur on either or both levels. For instance, a parent who tells his son that he talks too much but accompanies this message with a smile or laugh will probably not be perceived as denying the son's communication. However, were the father to accompany the same message with a frown and ominous tone of voice,

communication denial might easily be perceived; the son might logically assume that the father has no wish to hear his son's communication. In order for communication to be meaningful and clearly understood, it is necessary for both message and metacommunicative cues to carry similar meanings.

Another form of communication denial is an attempted refusal to communicate. In an interpersonal situation no person can refuse to communicate; the refusal is in itself a communication. Whether or not communication by refusal is intended, it still occurs, and a refusal to communicate in answer to an initiation of communication is a form of communication denial.

The third form of communication denial is that of nonverbal meta-communication. Metacommunicative cues which accompany linguistic messages ultimately establish the nature of an interpersonal relationship. For instance, if an incongruent communication is given, such as a professor's message that he would like to talk further with a student but his metacommunicative cue is a gathering of his books and tight lips or a worried expression, the student might perceive denial. The maxim that "actions speak louder than words" is particularly truthful in relation to perceived denial. Additional problems arise if the denial was not intentional and the denier does not realize that denial was perceived. For example, the student might rush off in a huff when he perceives denial on the part of the professor, and the professor might wonder all semester why the student never attempted to talk with him again.

The fourth form of communication denial concerns an implied re-

quest present in all initiation of communication. Satir (1967) mentions that all communication including metacommunication carries an implied request of "Please validate me." That is, all communication initiation carries an implicit request that this communication be responded to in some way. Further, the response to the initiated communication allows the initiator to perceive himself as worthy of the act of communicating. Ability to communicate is the result of a long process of socialization, and a person never loses the desire to be reinforced by others by being seen as a person capable of exchanging communication with others. The implied request of "Please validate me" is an attempt to further reinforce one's self and self-image. If man needed to hear no response to himself from others, the act of communication would lose all function except perhaps that of physiological survival. Thus, the implied request for validation is not a request for message or content validation but rather, for personal validation.

Three responses to the implied request of "Please validate me" are possible. First is agreement; a person is responded to as being right or valid. Second is disagreement; a person or his idea is not valid as seen by the respondent. However, both these responses validate the initiation of communication; a person is worthy of communication if he is worthy of being agreed or disagreed with. Something (the person) must exist in order to provide communicative interaction because he provides the basis for agreement or disagreement. The third response to the validation request is that of denial of existence of the question. This refusal to give any response at all also denies the existence of the communicator on an interpersonal, communicative level.

This response is directed toward the person communicating, not toward the message content as are agreement or disagreement. An example of this response is when Mary asks her mother for a new dress, and the mother answers that the dishes need to be done, or she might turn away and give no answer at all. Mary's question has not been recognized or responded to by either agreement or disagreement; it has been invalidated either by an irrelevant response or by no response at all. If such denial responses are repeated experiences for Mary, eventually she may have serious communication and/or psychological problems. However, Mary attempts to establish her validity in relation to every person she initiates communication with. If her mother establishes a pattern of denial through irrelevancy or non-responsiveness, Mary will find it easier to perceive denial on the part of others and will probably seek validating interaction even more. Defensive reactions often influence both communicators in an interaction, and perception is often distorted in direct relation to the level of defensiveness of each person. Conceivably Mary could perceive all communication as denial and become mentally unbalanced; one pattern occurring in the childhood of schizophrenics is a repeated denial of communication. Once the pattern is established damaging effects usually occur. Another important consideration is that denial given by many persons may constitute as serious a problem as denial by only one person. Effect of denial will vary according to the importance of the respondent for the initiator; if a person means nothing to someone his denial will probably not constitute a problem of self-validation. However, if the initiator perceives the respondent as a very important person, such as a parent, his response

will also be valued and effects of denial may be very great. One other point to consider is that denial may be given by an individual, a group, a culture, or a nation, as may the responses of agreement and disagreement. Implications of a validation request from a nation to another nation which meets denial are very necessary to consider in contemporary society.

#### IV. Summary

Occurrence of communication denial is precluded by several situational criteria. First, denial occurs only in interpersonal communication settings. Secondly, communications must be initiated by someone in the interaction. Thirdly, denial is perceived by the initiator and he will respond to it whether denial is unintended or actually occurred. Finally, denial is a refusal to recognize a communicative attempt.

Giffin mentions four forms of communication denial. First, denial may occur either on the metacommunicative or spoken levels. Secondly, a refusal to communicate is a communication within itself, and denial. Thirdly, denial is generally perceived on the metacommunicative level because this level ultimately establishes the nature of interpersonal relationships. Finally, denial of communication is a simultaneous denial of the implied request "Please validate me," which is inherent in all communication. Three responses to this request are possible: agreement, disagreement, and denial. Impact of the denial varies with the importance attached to the respondent and his response by the initiator of communication.



## V. Review of Previous Research

The following review of literature will establish the theoretical background and foundations on which the conceptualization of communication denial is based. Giffin's material will not be included in this section since his research has previously been discussed in the conceptualization section. At best, literature in the general area of communication denial is sparse and quite indirect; however, theoretical foundations for the concept of denial are present, and much research is geared to pathological consequences of communication denial, or to clinical studies. What is lacking is research focused on average people experiencing denial rather than an emphasis upon pathological complications. Terms may be confusing; aspects of denial have previously been named such things as "ignoring," "rejecting," or "disqualification."

### The Concept of Denial

A review of certain interpersonal communication principles and their relevance to satisfying interpersonal interaction will facilitate an understanding of the concept of communication denial.

People relate to each other and define themselves via the route of communication. In order to communicate, one must be able to register incoming signals, to evaluate signals and responses by scanning new impressions against a background of previously accumulated impressions, to transmit messages, and to respond to transmitted signals. Essentially the basis of communication is the ability to understand others' meanings and to make your meanings understood. In order to insure clear

understanding of meanings, specific instructions must accompany the message to insure proper interpretation. Thus, man communicates on two levels in an interpersonal situation--the "denotative" level and the "connotative" level. The first level carries the linguistic message, or the literal content of communication. The second level carries the cues and instructions which allow others to decipher intended meanings. Ruesch (1957) calls this second level "metacommunication" and the specific cues "metalanguage." "Metalanguage" includes such cues as posture, tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, speech patterns--all nonverbal cues which accompany messages. Satir (1967, p. 76) states that the metacommunicative level is a "comment on the literal content as well as the nature of the relationship between the persons involved . . . Metacommunication is a message about a message." Thus, the degree of congruence between metacommunication and denotative communication will influence the nature of the relationship as well as the interpretation of the received communication.

Watzlawick (1967, p. 51) states that "a metacommunicative axiom of the pragmatics of communication can be postulated: one cannot not communicate." He explains that communication conveys information but also imposes behavior; communication implies commitment and defines a relationship. Attention is paid more to how and why something is said than to what is said. Watzlawick uses the schizophrenic as an example of one who tries not to communicate but does so despite his best efforts; such ploys as "nonsense, silence, withdrawal, or immobility (all refusals to communicate) are still communication (Watzlawick, 1967, p. 50-51)." He goes on to say that "the schizophrenic is faced with

the impossible task of denying that he is communicating and at the same time denying that his denial is a communication (Watzlawick, 1967, p. 50-51)." The schizophrenic's attempts at non-communication still imply commitment and still define his view of his relationship with the receiver of the communication. When attempts are made at non-communication, whether by schizophrenics or by mentally healthy people, communication is denied and the fact of denial is still communicated by attempts at non-communication.

Satir (1967, p. 81) states that both levels of communication (denotative and connotative) carry an implied request of "Please validate me." This request is a request that the initiator of communication be responded to through the medium of the initial message. If I agree with a person's message, I also agree with him, since he formulated the message. One cannot refuse to respond to a request for validation; refusal is a form of denial and the denial is communicated by the refusal.

Laing (1961) refers to this request for validation as a measure of "confirmation." He states that one can think of individual actions and interaction sequences as being, in different ways, "confirmatory" or "disconfirmatory." There are three ways in which a person may perceive a response to his implied request for validation: (1) agreement--the person or his idea is confirmed; (2) disagreement--the person or his idea is disconfirmed; and (3) denial--denial of the existence of the question.

To refuse to give any response at all is not only denying the existence of the person on a communicative or interpersonal level; a refusal constitutes denial of that person. In order to agree or dis-

agree with a person that person must exist, as well as his request; existence of that person on an interpersonal level is confirmed either by agreement or disagreement. However, denial is not disagreement; it is a "non-response," "anti-communication." Denial is a refusal to acknowledge either the person or his question.

Watzlawick views the validation request as a means of commitment. He states that "conceivably the attempt not to communicate will exist in any context in which the commitment inherent in all communication is to be avoided (Watzlawick, 1967, p. 75)." The inherent commitment, to Watzlawick, is the agreement to respond to the request for validation. Reactions to the request for inherent commitment are three: (1) rejection; (2) acceptance of communication; and (3) disqualification--communication which in some way invalidates communication of the other person. Watzlawick also agrees that a flat refusal to communicate constitutes denial or disqualification, and he mentions other means of disqualification. He mentions that "disqualifications cover a wide range of communication phenomena, such as self-contradictions, inconsistencies, misunderstandings, an obscure style or mannerisms of speech, and the literal interpretation of literal remarks (Watzlawick, 1967, p. 75)."

Ruesch (1957, p. 53) states that one of the factors involved in disturbed communication is the absence of an appropriate response to a message. "Appropriate response, therefore, is one of the most important factors in psychological growth. . . An appropriate response clarifies. . . unsatisfactory acknowledgement, in contrast, has devastating effects." He explains that feedback circuits are central to a satis-

factory process of communication; they provide "an opportunity to relay back to the original sender the effects a statement has had upon other participants (Ruesch, 1957, p. 34)." Denial, of course, is a refusal to recognize original communication; thus, verbal feedback does not exist in a denial situation. Ruesch also states that two symptoms of disturbed communication are qualitatively deviant responses and inappropriately patterned responses. When a qualitatively deviant response is used, this is a reply to an incidental aspect of the sender's message; the sender's intent and content of the message are disregarded. Ruesch calls this response a "tangential reply," which is a form of communication denial. He explains that the tangential response constitutes one of the most frustrating forms of communication. Laing (1961) also mentions the tangential reply as a form of communication denial; he says it occurs when a mocking denial of the sender occurs; for instance, one would respond to communication with a totally irrelevant response or respond to only one aspect of the original communication.

Ruesch also mentions a second type of response which is a symptom of deviant communication, the inappropriately patterned response. This is the completely unrelated reply, a response which is ill-matched in modality to the original communication. He notes that one means of producing pathological communicative patterns in children is to respond habitually to the child with different modalities. He emphasizes the importance of effective communication abilities as part of developing a healthy self-concept: "We can postulate the existence of an inherent need in the individual--the need to communicate. . . if the individual wishes to survive and remain healthy (Ruesch, 1957, p. 45)."

Watzlawick also mentions one other response to a validation request, which he calls "the symptom," that is, the receiver convinces himself and others that he is at the mercy of forces beyond his own control and thus cannot communicate. An example of "the symptom" would be illustrated by two people in a plane seat next to each other. One person might begin a conversation, and the other feigns sleep or a speech impediment to escape a commitment to converse. Watzlawick states that disqualifications are "resorted to by anybody who is caught in a situation in which he feels obliged to communicate but at the same time wants to avoid the commitment inherent in all communication (Watzlawick, 1967, p. 77-78)."

Watzlawick also delves into the concept of denial in a section about the self and others. He says that all communication is a process by which a person (P) tells the other person (O) how he sees himself in that situation. O may choose among three responses to P's view of himself. The first is confirmation, O accepts P's definition of P. Confirmation is quite important to insure mental development and stability; Buber (1957, p. 85) states that "the basis of every man's life is twofold, and it is one--the wish of every man to be confirmed as what he is. . . by men; and the innate capacity of man to confirm his fellowmen in this way."

The second response to P by O is rejection; O rejects P's definition of P, but O does not negate the reality of P; he merely disagrees. The third response of O to P is disconfirmation; O negates the reality of P; O is not concerned with the truth or falsity of P's view of himself, because, disconfirmation says, in effect, "You do not exist (Watz-

lawick, 1967, p. 86)."

Watzlawick also mentions that the feedback process is essential; communication proceeds through several levels. First, P initiates his view of himself; O returns his response to P; this is how I see you. Then P returns to O: this is how I see you seeing me. O returns to P: this is how I see you seeing me seeing you. These levels of abstraction spiral into infinity as communication progresses, and all three responses of confirmation, rejection, or disconfirmation are possible on all three levels. Misinterpretations and denial of messages are also possible on each level, and before communication is able to progress to another level, meanings must be clearly understood by both P and O.

Thus, Satir, Laing, and Watzlawick are all essentially talking about the same thing: a person sends a request for validation or commitment inherent in all his communication, and three responses are possible to this validation request: confirmation (agreement), rejection (disagreement), or disconfirmation (denial).

Denial is a fairly common phenomenon in the communication process. Lafore (1945, p. 134) found that the communication of children "was ignored more often when it was positive than when the parent might have had reason to ignore it because the parent disapproved of, or disagreed with, the child." Laing (1961, p. 91) tells of the effects of communication denial in the following example:

The characteristic family pattern that has emerged from the study of families of schizophrenics does not so much involve a child who is subject to outright neglect or even to obvious trauma, but a child whose authenticity has been subjected to subtle, but persistent, mutilation, often quite unwittingly.

Another disturbed communication experience that tends to impair the individual's self-concept and development of healthy interaction patterns is suppression of communication. Heider (1968, p. 16) states that "if a child's communication encounters negative feedback, negative feelings about himself are likely to follow. . . continued attempts at self-expression, met by parental suppression, are likely to produce an undesirable self-concept."

The concepts described by Ruesch, Laing, and Heider may be included in the concept of "rejection" developed by Moustakas, Sigel, and Shalock (1956). "Rejection" to them is a nonacceptance of the child's stimulation, by changing the subject or interrupting with irrelevancies, by denying the validity of the child's statement or action, by rejecting the child as a person, or by ignoring or evading a direct appeal of the child. Moustakas (1959, p. 3) sees some degree of unhampered, non-critical acceptance of a child's communication as vital; he feels that repeated experiences of denied opportunities to communicate lead to self-depreciation: "the growth of self has been impaired because of the rejection in important personal relationships. He has been severely rejected by others and has come to reject himself."

Laing (1961, p. 161) offers further insights into possible consequences of denial:

The ultimate of this is that when O is placed in an untenable position, that is, when no matter how he feels or acts, no matter what meaning he gives the situation, his feelings are denuded of validity, his acts are stripped of their motives, intentions, and consequences, the situation is so robbed of meaning to him that he is totally mystified and alienated.



Alienation often leads to isolation and withdrawal from interaction. Giffin (1968, p. 17) has compared average Kansas University freshmen and sophomores with those identified as being victims of speech anxiety, and he remarks that the "most marked difference in behavior of these students. . . is not their poor ability to communicate, but their tendency to avoid or withdraw from interaction situations." He also mentions that the "speech anxiety syndrome" indicates that these victims of speech anxiety are significantly different from the average student in terms of low self-image, low degree of trust for others, high motivation to avoid failure and low motivation to achieve success, greater suppression of their childhood communication efforts by their parents, and that they have experienced a significantly greater than average degree of communication denial from persons held by them to be important. He also states that "this introspective pattern. . . all point to the probability of a significantly high degree of social alienation (Giffin, 1968, p. 17)." He concludes that "the results of this investigation may be interpreted as an indication of a possible causal connection between perceived communication denial and social alienation (Giffin, 1968, p. 21)." Thus, the effects of communication denial may lead to quite serious consequences for the victims.

### Summary

The literature thus reviewed shows an attempt to conceptualize the experience of communication denial. Several principles reappear throughout the literature:

1. Communication denial is an experience which is perceived

by the sender. He perceives that the receiver has refused to acknowledge his message, his existence, or both.

2. Once communication denial has been perceived by the sender, he will react to it whether the denial actually occurred or not or whether the receiver intended denial or not.

3. Denial constitutes disconfirmation of the person experiencing the denial.

4. Denial may be expressed by verbal or nonverbal (meta-communicative) channels.

5. Persistent denial may establish communication and psychological patterns which may cause pathological mental disturbances.

6. Denial may be overt or indirect (indirect denial would be by such means as tangentializations, irrelevancies, etc.).

## VI. Definitions of Major Concepts and Terms

### Major Concepts

Communication denial has occurred "when two or more people are together and one of them attempts to initiate communication, the other(s) ignore or refuse to recognize this attempt, i.e., they behave as if no communication attempt has occurred (Giffin, 1971, Quarterly Journal of Speech, in press)." The sender's existence on a functional level has been denied.

Three major types of communication denial have been suggested in the previous literature:

1. Suppression. Suppression occurs when "a child who desires to express himself obtains negative reactions from his parents (Heider, 1968, p. 16)." For purposes of this study, the concept of suppression will not be limited to parent-child relationships but will be applied

to any situation in which a sender desires to express his ideas verbally and is met with negative reactions which the sender perceives as directed toward the act of communication rather than the message.

## 2. Qualitatively Deviant and Inappropriately Patterned Responses.

This form includes Ruesch's tangential response (the receiver refuses to acknowledge the intent of the sender by replying to an incidental aspect of the original statement, by replying with an irrelevant response, or by ignoring the original message). Also included in this form is a response which is ill-matched in modality with the original communication. Watzlawick's common schizophrenic responses are also included in this category: "self-contradictions, inconsistencies, subject switches, tangentializations, incomplete sentences, misunderstandings, obscure style or mannerisms of speech, and the literal interpretation of metaphors and the metaphorical interpretation of literal remarks (Watzlawick, 1967, p. 75)."

3. Overt Denial. The speaker is met with a direct response which demands an immediate cessation of communication at that time, on that topic, by that communicator. "Don't talk to me," "I won't listen," or withdrawal are examples of overt denial.

## Definition of Major Terms

Two major terms need definition; they are "victim" and "denier." A victim of communication denial is a person who attempts to initiate some form of communication and is met with denial; he is the sender of communication. The denier is the person who denies the sender's communication; he is the respondent or receiver of the original communication.

## VII. Specific Problems To Be Studied

The specific goals of this thesis are: (1) to devise an inventory which will indicate which responses are considered appropriate to which communication denial situations by the average college student; (2) to identify the major dimensions of the experience of communication denial; (3) to identify which variables in a communication situation "make a difference," i.e., which variables cause that situation to be perceived as including the element of communication denial. It is the broad aim of this study to establish a theoretical and practical framework, based on the data obtained, for further exploration of causes and effects of communication denial. The entire problem is relatively unexplored and has too many relevant social implications to be ignored.

### Responses to Communication Denial

Of vital importance to this study is the range of responses of a person who has experienced communication denial. Possible reactions would vary between an acceptance of the invalidation of the self and a refusal to accept the denial. A refusal to accept the implication of the denial could produce some form of psychological or cognitive imbalance; according to the balance theory of human behavior, people tend toward a balance when confronted with incongruities.

Perceptions must be consistent with feelings and beliefs in order to create a balance; if a person who considers himself worthy of communication receives a denial, he might accept the denial, creating a balance by adjusting his image of himself. He might refuse to accept the denial but in taking this course he will eventually have to accept

the invalidation or change his view of himself as a valid person in order to retain balance. Rosenberg and Abelson (1960) call this imbalance "unstable interpersonal cognition." To reduce imbalance, a person may (1) repeat his communication; (2) escalate the level of communication by such means as increasing the tone, volume, or pitch in verbal communication, or by increasing physical movements; and (3) overtly question the denial. If the person chooses to repeat communication, he might evoke a rewarding response, find that denial had not actually occurred, or he might again experience denial. If escalation produces desired effects, this response will probably be reinforced and seen as effective because it produces a response. Lafore (1945, p. 55) states that "ignoring the child seemed also to be a practice which tended to accentuate undesirable behavior. . .if legitimate and desirable claims are ignored by the parents and undesirable behavior commented upon, surely a child who wants attention will resort to undesirable behavior."

A direct confrontation about the denial is not feasible in many cases. A specific request of an explanation of the denial often produces no results, and it is possible that again denial may occur. As Giffin (1968, p. 8) explains, "such overt metacommunication is rarely initiated by the person in the weaker 'one-down' position who feels threatened, and the denial of one's existence (on any level) by a valued other will produce a feeling of threat." Often when a high level of defensiveness or threat marks a communicative interaction, large degrees of openness in communication are almost impossible.

Resignation to the implication of denial may result in several reactions depending on (1) the value of the communication by the one

experiencing denial; and (2) the intensity and frequency of denial experienced. Resignation leading to social and psychological withdrawal is the most serious of these reactions.

Giffin postulates four possible responses to different situations of communication denial. First, the individual can repeat his initial communication, including the implied request of "Please validate me." Secondly, he can initiate overt verbal communication about the denial, asking for a direct explanation of why the denial occurred. As mentioned earlier, if the situation is at all threatening, this response is not likely to be chosen. Thirdly, he can escalate the demand for validation by using different vocal tones, gestures, threatening postures, or other means. Finally, he may accept the implication of the denial--the belief that he is not capable of communicating on that level with that person at that time.

If the first response is chosen and is successful, the denial will have little impact. The second response is not feasible in many situations; Watzlawick makes the point that having already been denied, it takes considerable courage for that person to risk a second denial.

The third response, escalation, is a common behavioral pattern today, as evidenced by student riots and racial unrest. In threatening situations, many people become hostile and aggressively violent while others simply withdraw from the situation. Bion (1952) describes this pattern as "fight-flight" behavior. Often people vacillate between fight or flight behavior and eventually withdraw if hostility gains no desired responses. The fourth alternative, withdrawal, is often a response to feelings of social alienation or isolation, usually described

as frustration, powerlessness, or futility.

For purposes of this study I felt it necessary to extend the range of responses to communication denial. I have not added anything new; I have only clarified and elaborated on the four responses mentioned by Giffin. I have selected eight responses as those which would include most possible behavioral responses to situations of communication denial. These eight responses may be found in Table 1.

#### Variables Which 'Make a Difference'

I have interviewed friends and fellow graduate students in order to establish a basis for selection of variables most influential in communication denial situations. Many people mentioned parent-child, student-faculty, and husband-wife communication situations as including elements of denial. Variables thought possibly influential in denial situations included the message, the people involved, the communication situation, including purpose, intent, and context. Thus, I have arbitrarily selected three variables which appear to influence all communication processes as the three variables most influential in identifying communication situations including elements of communication denial. They include the message, the receiver (the denier), and the context.

TABLE 1

## POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO COMMUNICATION DENIAL

---

1. Repetition	Repetition of the initial communication, including repetition of the request, "Please validate me."
2. Metacommunication	An attempt initiated to ask questions about the denial to find out why it occurred.
3. Acceptance-withdrawal	Cessation of communication attempts, accepting the implication of invalidation and assuming that you are not capable of communicating with this person at this time on this level. Includes withdrawal from interaction.
4. Attention-getting verbal escalation	Raise your voice, cry, or yell, in order to get the denier's attention and to obtain a response.
5. Verbal attack	"Get even" by personal insults, sarcasm, or name-calling.
6. Physical escalation	Physically attempt to get the denier to respond; for instance, shaking the denier's arm.
7. Physical attack	Physically attack the denier; includes personal violence.
8. Property damage	Damage the denier's property; includes rioting, riot damage, and more personal, direct acts of violence, but not physically attacking the denier.

---



The importance of the message varies from situation to situation, and in order for denial to have a significant impact, the message must be considered important insofar as it is structured to gain a certain response. The importance of the message to the sender (the victim) is the main criterion for this variable. Even a simple "hello" may be an important message; it may be structured to gain an important response. A simple request for information may not be important in itself but in context may become quite important if denied.

The importance of the receiver to the sender, i.e., the person who denies the original communication, is closely tied to the importance of the message and to the impact denial will have. Denial will have more impact if the denier is very important to the victim. If the denier is a valued other or someone central in the victim's life, he is expected to reinforce the victim's ego or self-concept. His opinion will be weighed and considered, and the victim wants to hear his opinion. If the denier is relatively unimportant, he can probably assume that denial will have little impact. For instance, if the sender asks for information and is denied by someone unimportant, he can probably seek this information elsewhere and denial will be of little significance. On the other hand, if the denier is the only person having this information, denial will have more impact.

The victim's perception of the intent of the denier will also influence his choice of responses to the denial. Previous interaction with the denier will also influence response choice; if communication denial is a usual pattern of interaction, responses are likely to be limited. Also, whether or not the denier is an unfamiliar or familiar

person to the victim will influence responses; a familiar person is probably more important to the victim than a stranger.

The third variable is that of context; communication denial may occur in a public or private context. If the context of the denial is public, the victim will be influenced by other people's reactions, by group norms, which may or may not be congruent with personal attitudes and values, by formality or informality of the situation, and by the number of people composing the public context. For facility in this thesis I have restricted my view of the public context to a group of three to twelve people (a small group); however, public contexts can range from three people to an infinite number

If the denial occurs in a private context, many influences affect response choice. If the victim and denier are members of the same or common groups or share similar attitudes, then norms will again influence response choice. All attributes of the receiver as a variable are also present, such as his being a valued other or not, his intent, previous interaction with him, and his relative familiarity. The goals and intent of each person in the interaction also affect response choice, as well as implications the situation might carry for both people involved. In a one-to-one interaction the purpose of communication is rarely informational; private communication is also usually personal to a degree. Interaction could occur in a public context only for information gain.

Thus, many factors are involved in the three variables believed to influence response choice. In conclusion, the three variables which "make a difference" in denial situations may include message content as

important or unimportant, the receiver (denier) as important or unimportant, and the context as public or private communication. The influence of the three variables remains to be verified in development and interpretation of the inventory.

I would like to add as a last word several principles which I consider to be relevant to the concept of communication denial:

1. In order to be a victim of communication denial, the person must initiate some form of communication.

2. Actual communication denial cannot occur unless the sender perceives the denier's response to his initial communication as desirable. And, if the response of the denier is desired, he is also desirable to the victim. Some degree of denial could occur if the receiver and/or his response are not considered desirable by the victim, but this small degree of denial would probably not influence communication processes as more acute denial would.

3. Communication denial may be a response of a person, a group, a subculture, or a nation, to any communication initiated by a person, a group, a subculture, or a nation. For purposes of this study, simultaneous instances of denial (two parents, for instance) will be considered to be a denial rather than two separate occurrences of denial.

#### VIII. Summary of Study Aims

The principal concern of this study is to investigate which responses the average college undergraduate chooses for varying situations of communication denial. This objective will be facilitated by construction of a measuring device, the Communication Denial Response

Inventory, on which a subject reports his usual responses to eight various situations of communication denial. Reliability and validity checks will be made on the measuring instrument. Findings about usual responses to communication denial will be used to identify major dimensions of the experience of communication denial, to suggest possible directions for subsequent research, and to provide further data to support the concept of communication denial as related to social alienation and other important social problems.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The main objective of this study is to determine what people choose as responses to selected situations of communication denial. To facilitate this objective, a paper and pencil inventory was constructed which asked a person to report his usual behavior in response to eight different situations of communication denial. Reliability and validity checks were made on the inventory; the study is directed to the average college undergraduate: What responses do average college undergraduates choose for various situations of communication denial?

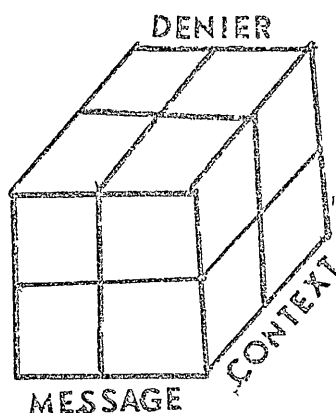
#### I. Methodology of the Measuring Instrument

##### The Behavior Differential

The introspective inventory developed in this study was patterned somewhat after a behavioral differential developed by H.C. Triandis (1964). Triandis devised his differential as a method of analyzing the behavioral component of social attitudes. The behavioral component is seen as consisting of variables which form what Triandis calls a "cube of data." One side of the cube is formed by a stimulus person with specified characteristics such as age, race, color, sex, etc. This side of the cube consists mainly of demographic data. The second face of the cube is formed by behaviors which a person may undertake with a stimulus person; some usual behaviors might include "marry," "work with," etc. The third face of the cube consists of the subject, who reports his likely behavior with the stimulus person. Triandis also includes a possible

"fourth side of the cube" which he calls "situational or environmental" stimuli.

The present study uses the cube as a model for the independent variables. One side of the cube consists of the message, as important or unimportant. A second side of the cube is formed by the denier variable, important or unimportant. A third side of the cube is formed by the context variable, private or public. Thus, the "cube of data" obtained from this study looks like this:



Triandis has his subjects report their behavioral intent on a nine-interval bi-polar scale involving an "I would-I would not. . ." response. An example illustrates the typical item form:

A 30 YEAR OLD PHYSICIAN, INTROVERTED

(I) would' 1 ' 2 ' 3 ' 4 ' 5 ' 6 ' 7 ' 8 ' 9 'would not  
work with this person

The behavior differential allows a respondent to indicate on the scale the extent to which he "would" or "would not" participate in various behaviors with a given stimulus person. Scores of the differential are the sums of responses to items: this sum indicates the subject's be-

havioral intent. The larger the score, the greater the intent. This study uses an "I generally do-I generally do not" response in order to reduce possible social norm biases and to partially correct for conformity tendencies.

Two other aspects of Triandis' differential are relevant. First, the differential is constructed so that it allows for the characteristics of the stimulus person to be presented on two or more levels. For example, a subject may be asked to report his behavioral intent toward a "30 year old female physician, introverted." A comparison of responses to differences in a single variable provides information about the influence of that variable on behavioral intent. The use of two levels of each of the three stimulus characteristics provides a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  factorial design. The present study uses three stimulus characteristics presented on two levels each, yielding a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  factorial design. This design permits analysis of the influence of three stimulus variables upon behavioral intent.

The second important aspect of the differential concerns the behaviors. Triandis wanted to discover if various behaviors were viewed as similar by subjects. Certain behaviors, when viewed similarly, would form "clusters" or behavioral factors. Pursuit of this question led to a factor analysis of the behavioral scales which identified five major orthogonal behavioral factors. The present study uses eight possible responses to situations involving communication denial. At some time in the future we hope to factor analyze the response data collected from this study; however, for this thesis report neither time nor scope will allow carrying out such a procedure.

The identification of behavioral factors and presentation of stimulus person characteristics on various levels allowed Triandis to determine to what extent the variance in a subject's reported behavioral intent is controlled by variations in the stimulus person characteristics. Similarly, in this study, the aim was to design an inventory which would provide data about how variations of the components of denial situations would influence responses to these situations.

Like Triandis' questionnaire which asks what a subject "would" or "would not" do, this study asks the subject to report what he generally does or does not do. By basing responses on previous experiences, it is hoped that social norm biases will be reduced. Thus, subjects reported usual tendencies to respond to the eight various situations of communication denial. By varying situation characteristics, it was also possible, in this study, to determine the variance each set of situational components controlled in the response tendencies.

Similarities of the instrument used in this study (which will be named the Communication Denial Response Inventory, or CDRI) to Triandis' behavioral differential have been noted. The basic design using the "cube of data" is similar; the response questionnaire is also similar. Data was obtained about the behavioral intent of subjects in response to various situations of communication denial.

## II. The Procedure

### Communication Denial Response Inventory

The aim of this study was the development of a pencil and paper inventory, termed the Communication Denial Response Inventory (CDRI),



on which a subject could report his usual tendencies in responding to the various communication denial situations. In Chapter 1 the variables relevant to inventory development were identified and defined. The various denial situations included three variables with two levels each: message (important-unimportant); denier (important-unimportant); context (private-public). The eight possible responses included: repetition, metacommunication, acceptance-withdrawal, attention-getting verbal escalation (raise your voice, cry or yell), verbal attack (insults, name-calling, sarcasm), physical escalation, physical attack, and property damage.

Situational Variables. The variables of each communication denial situation included three with two levels each. These were: (1) the message (important-unimportant); (2) the denier (important-unimportant); (3) the context (private-public). Each of the eight possible variable combinations was represented by one CDRI item. The eight possible variable combinations follow:

1. Message-important; denier-important; context-private.  
(A1, B1, C1)
2. Message-unimportant; denier-unimportant; context-private.  
(A2, B2, C1)
3. Message-unimportant; denier-important; context-group.  
(A2, B1, C2)
4. Message-unimportant; denier-unimportant; context-group.  
(A2, B2, C2)
5. Message-important; denier-unimportant; context-group.  
(A1, B2, C2)
6. Message-important; denier-important; context-group.  
(A1, B1, C2)
7. Message-important; denier-unimportant; context-private.  
(A1, B2, C1)
8. Message-unimportant; denier-important; context-private.  
(A2, B1, C1)

These variables and the two levels for each were chosen by combin-

ing findings from previous research (see Chapter I) and from several interviews with graduate students and professors in speech communication. Previous research indicated that the most general and important components of any communication situation include the speaker, the listener, the situation, and the message. Message and situation were confirmed in denial literature as important factors in perception of communication denial; this literature also indicated that the denier was a third important factor. The interviews confirmed that the message, the denier, and the situation or context seemed to be most important factors in contributing to perception of denial in communication situations; thus, these three variables were chosen. Size of the communication situation was chosen to represent the contextual variable because much literature emphasizes that reactions to any communication will vary when this communication takes place in private versus group settings. In this study, private refers to interaction with only one other person regardless of other elements in the situation; for instance, in this sense, private communication can occur in a public place such as a restaurant or the Student Union. Public communication refers to communicative interaction with more than one person.

Interviews and research also suggested that the relative importance-unimportance of both the message and the denier contribute to the total impact of a communication denial event. Interviewees suggested that the impact of a denial situation influences the victim's responses to the denial; thus, the combination of the three variables and their levels produced eight situations ranging from much to little impact. Three variables presented on two levels each would yield a manageable number of

situation conditions not likely to fatigue a subject (Kerlinger, 1967, p. 227). These three variables and their respective levels are presented in Table 2:

TABLE 2

CDRI Situational Variables and Levels	
Situational Variables	Levels
1. Message (A)	a. Important (A1) b. Unimportant (A2)
2. Denier (B)	a. Important (B1) b. Unimportant (B2)
3. Context (C)	a. Private (C1) b. Public (C2)

Responses to Situations of Communication Denial. Possible responses to various situations of communication denial were also selected from a combination of previous research and interviews. Giffin (1970) postulates four possible responses to different situations of communication denial (see Chapter I). An individual can repeat his initial communication attempt; he can initiate overt verbal communication about the denial (metacommunication); he can escalate his demand for validation of his communication by using different vocal tones, gestures, postures, etc.; or he can accept the implication of the denial--that he is not capable of communicating with that person at that time on that level or topic. For purposes of this study I felt it necessary to extend the range of possible responses to communication denial, partially because of the current mode of violence as a response to communication denial. I also felt that es-

calation as a response involved several levels and needed more specificity. Thus, I selected eight possible responses as those which include most behavioral responses to communication denial (see Table 1, Chapter I, page 24).

Communication Denial Response Inventory Format. The differential form used to incorporate the three major situational variables and respective levels and possible behavioral responses was a five-interval bipolar scale. The format is modeled after Triandis' (1964) behavioral differential items. Consideration was given to the possible use of a seven-point scale, based upon the report of Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957, p. 85):

Over a large number of different subjects in many different experiments it has been found that with seven alternatives all of them tend to be used roughly, if not exactly, equal frequencies.

However, it was felt that with eight different behaviors composing each response questionnaire (eight in all: responses to the eight different communication denial situations), that a five-interval bi-polar scale would produce less subject fatigue than the seven-alternative scale. Another consideration was that, in this study, no attempt was made to insure equal frequencies of the alternatives; rather, it was hoped that several of the possible responses would obtain more extreme tendency scores than others. Thus, to insure that variance of intent from response to response would be noted and to prevent subject fatigue, a five-interval bi-polar scale was selected as more meaningful for this particular study.

An illustrative item is shown in Table 3 (the example for this item follows):

The chancellor at your university has called an all-student convocation to discuss a strike over Vietnam and how the strike will affect finals. The actual question is if the university will close or not on account of the strike. He tells the student body that he will allow no strike and that classes will proceed as usual, and he leaves, allowing no questioning. This question and his answer are quite important to you, as well as the supposed discussion about student wishes.

TABLE 3

---

VI. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP

Ia. Attempt again to get a response by repeating your initial communication.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ib. Ask why your communication was ignored.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ic. Stop trying to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Id. Raise your voice, yell, or cry.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ie. Call names, insult, or be sarcastic.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

---

TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)

---

If. Physically attempt to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ig. Physically attack the denier.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ih. Damage the denier's property.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

---

The three situational variables and their levels used in this illustrative item are, respectively, message-important; denier-important; context-public (A1, B1, C2). The eight possible responses may also be seen in Table 3.

Communication Denial Response Inventory Scoring. Each CDRI item was scored by assigning a one to five numerical score for each scale interval for each of the eight response scales included for each of the eight items. The "generally do" pole received a five score, which reflected a definite tendency to use this response while in that particular denial situation. The "generally do not" pole received a one score, reflecting a definite tendency not to use that behavior in response to that particular situation. The higher the score for that response, the greater the tendency to use that particular behavior, or response. There are

eight different possible types of responses to each of the eight different sets of communication denial conditions. For each type of response, the degree of behavioral intent can be summed for a number of subjects, and the summed scores for each possible response under each set of communication denial conditions can be compared.

The Pilot Study. Once variables forming the CDRI were selected, the differential examples were subjected to a pilot study. Professors and graduate students in speech communications gave reactions and suggestions for improving the examples; the aim of the pilot study was to determine if the examples provided for each denial situation on the inventory illustrated what the researcher wished them to illustrate. People responded to the examples in terms of agreement or disagreement with the relative importance-unimportance of the message and the denier and the private-public context of the situation. Sixteen examples were presented randomly (two for each of the eight communication conditions, or items); frequencies of agreement or disagreement with each level of each variable were tallied. Ten people responded to the pilot study; examples which reflected more than eighty percent agreement with the researcher's evaluation were chosen. A copy of the pilot study plus tally results is included in Appendix A. Results of the pilot study allowed eight examples with the highest agreement ratings to be chosen to illustrate each of the denial situations for the CDRI.

Concern was expressed that several of the examples did not illustrate the levels for each situational variable; however, these examples received low agreement ratings (less than eighty percent), and these examples were discarded. Examples were written in terms of communication

conditions which should be familiar to the average college undergraduate, situations encompassing both academic and social life. The researcher attempted to use references to generally non-intimate persons such as employers, professors, peers, etc., for the examples; it was suggested in a thesis conference that persons such as parents, spouses, or persons holding special emotional attachments for the subject would represent special associations and implications and that use of such intimate relationships in the examples might confound the effects of the situational, or independent, variables.

The Pretest. The CDRI, with examples chosen from the pilot study, and instruction pages, is presented with randomized denial situations, or items, in Appendix B. The inventory was pretested on one section of twenty beginning speech students at the University of Kansas in the second week of April, 1971. Administration details were checked, and the students were interviewed following completion of the inventory. All subjects completed administration of the CDRI in twenty minutes.

Following administration of the inventory, the researcher discussed the questionnaire with the class. Questions were asked about understanding of instructions, clearness of instructions, problems in envisioning the different denial situations, and other problems in scale completion. There were no problems with instructions except for their length; however, the researcher felt that were the instructions briefer, understanding of the inventory would be less complete.

One problem the researcher was especially concerned with was that the subjects might respond only to the examples provided for each item rather than to the generalized conditions represented by the example,



with failure to envision similar situations from previous experience. However, the subjects in the pretest reported that they had no trouble in envisioning these situations. They said that they read the examples quickly but did not return to them when responding to each communication condition, or item. The examples were printed on pages separately from the items and response scales purposely to prevent response set or overuse of the examples for response scales. Thus, evidence did not support the fear of response set due to examples. Another fear that subject fatigue would be the result of long response scales was also unsupported; students finished the scales quickly before a class hour was ended. In addition, all students stated that they had found themselves in each of the particular denial situations at one time or another in their lives.

### The Sample

Explanation of reliability and validity checks on the CDRI will be more meaningful if the subjects used in this study are first described. This study attempts to focus on the average college undergraduate; therefore; students in the Fundamentals of Speech IB: Interpersonal Communication course at the University of Kansas were used as the subject population. This course offers student experience in dyadic and small group interaction and communication.

A sample of at least fifty subjects was desired in order to obtain data on each communication denial situation. Since each subject responded to eight different five-interval bipolar scales in response to each of the eight different denial situations, a sample was needed which would reflect actual behavioral tendencies and in order for analysis of vari-

ance to be feasible. The sample for this study consisted of three sections of Speech IB students. Sampling was conducted the third and fourth weeks of June, 1971. Each subjects was asked to complete the Communication Denial Response Inventory; altogether fifty-two subjects completed the inventory.

#### Validity of the Communication Denial Response Inventory

The ideal validity check for the Communication Denial Response Inventory would involve actually placing the subjects in the eight different communication denial situations in real life, and observing responses to each situation using the CDRI as a guide. Comparisons could then be made between observations of actual response behavior and each subject's reported response tendencies on the CDRI. However, such a validity check is far beyond the scope of this thesis; such a check will have to be made at a later time.

There appears to be no other validity check for the Communication Denial Response Inventory other than a simultaneous testing of real-life responses to denial situations with the CDRI, or with a similar instrument check, but, since none exists, this check is also impossible. For this study an assumption will have to be made that an introspective scale such as the CDRI does measure actual as well as reported behavioral tendencies, and that these introspective reports are valid. The researcher and thesis advisors agree, however, that the Communication Denial Response Inventory does contain face validity; i.e., that it appears to measure what it is purported to measure, or should measure.

### Data Analysis

The statistical technique used in analyzing the data for the research question (what responses does the average college undergraduate choose for various communication denial situations?) was analysis of variance. A description of how the CDRI data was handled will clarify the form of analysis of variance used for the data.

The Communication Denial Response Inventory was formed by eight communication denial situations, or items, with eight possible responses for each of these eight situations. Subjects could mark each response for each item on a one-to-five interval bipolar scale, indicating general behavioral tendencies of choice or rejection of the particular response. It was hypothesized that subjects' responses would be significantly different for each different denial situation. An analysis of variance was conducted, comparing the effects the independent variables (the different items) upon choice of the dependent variables (the eight different responses).

Independent and dependent variables can be identified at this point. The eight denial situations, or items, are viewed as treatments encompassing three independent variables: message, denier, and context. The dependent variables are the subjects' scores on the CDRI which indicate choice or rejection of the eight possible responses for each item.

Therefore, the influence of the eight different treatment conditions on the eight different dependent variables was

investigated. Each subject received each "treatment" when completing the CDRI. Thus, analysis of variance using a factorial design with repeated measures on each factor was used to analyze the data for the research question. Since each of the three independent variables was present on two levels each (message, important-unimportant; denier, important-unimportant; context, private-public), a 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design was used in this study.

Data for the research question was first analyzed using the SFA49A Histogram Routine from the Kansas University Computation Center Program Library, for both dependent and independent variables. Use of this program indicated frequencies of the eight different responses across all eight different "treatments," as well as frequencies of the responses for each treatment. The SFA01C Correlations, Scatter Plots, and Standard Scores Program was used to analyze the data; this program correlated dependent variables (the eight responses) and provided standard scores for analysis. Finally, data was analyzed using the BMD08V program for Analysis of Variance. BMD08V can be used with nested, partially nested, partially crossed, and fully crossed designs. The analysis of variance used for the research question in this study was a fully crossed design.

### III. Summary

The main objective of this study is to determine what responses people choose to selected situations of communication denial. To facilitate this objective, a paper and pencil inventory, the Communication Denial Response Inventory (CDRI), was constructed which asked a person to report his usual behavior to eight different situations of communication denial. A pilot study and pretest were conducted before sampling. Fifty-two Fundamentals of Speech IB: Interpersonal Communication students composed the sample. Reliability and validity checks were made on this inventory. Analysis of variance was the statistical technique used to analyze the inventory data.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

The question investigated for this study was: what responses do average college undergraduates choose for various situations of communication denial? Responses were obtained by using a five-interval bipolar scale; eight different combinations of the three independent variables with two levels each composed the eight different "treatment" conditions. Three means of data analysis were used to test the research hypothesis: histograms, dependent variable correlations, and analysis of variance.

#### I. Histogram Results

A. Response Frequencies. An overall histogram was used to determine frequencies of responses regardless of treatment conditions. Results are reported in Tables 4-11. Results indicated that most subjects chose two responses as behaviors suitable for all situations of communication denial: repetition of initial communication and acceptance-withdrawal. Most subjects did not choose verbal escalation, verbal attack, physical escalation, personal attack, or property damage as responses to situations of communication denial.

Subjects were evenly split between definitely choosing or definitely not choosing repetition as a response for all conditions of communication denial. Thirty-three percent of subjects (N=52) did not choose this

response (thirty-three percent of subjects gave this response a one score, reflecting a definite tendency not to use this behavior as a response to denial). Twenty-seven percent of subjects (N=52) definitely chose this response (a five score, which reflects a definite tendency to use this behavior in response to denial). Forty percent of subjects (N=52) varied between two and four scores for this response (a two score indicates that the subject is neither neutral nor wishes to indicate definite tendencies to reject the particular behavior; likewise, a four score indicates that the subject is neither neutral nor wishes to indicate definite tendencies to choose the behavior. A three score indicates neutrality; the subject neither wishes to choose or reject the particular behavior).

For metacommunication (asking about the denial), forty-eight percent of subject (N=52) rejected this response for all denial situations (a one score). The remaining fifty-two percent (N=52) were split evenly around two to five scores.

Twenty-seven percent of subjects (N=52) rejected withdrawal as a response to all denial situations (a one score). Twenty-eight percent of subjects (N=52) definitely chose this response (a five score). Remaining subjects were evenly split across choosing two to four scores.

Verbal escalation (raising one's voice, crying, or yelling) was rejected by seventy-eight percent of subjects for denial situations (N=52), indicating a general tendency to avoid this response. Likewise, seventy-nine percent of subjects (N=52) rejected verbal attack (calling names, insulting, or using sarcasm). Eighty-nine percent

of subjects (N=52) rejected physical escalation. Ninety-seven percent (N=52) of subjects rejected both personal attack, and property damage. Thus, most subjects tend to avoid any type of violent response for all situations of communication denial.

In summary, the most frequent responses chosen for situations of communication denial were repetition and withdrawal. Half of the subjects rejected metacommunication (N=52). Approximately eighty percent of subjects definitely rejected verbal escalation (N=52); verbal attack (N=52); physical escalation (N=52); personal attack (N=52); and property damage as responses to situations of communication denial (N=52).

B. Response Frequencies for Each Condition. Response frequencies for each condition were also investigated. A total of sixty-four histograms were analyzed; each of the eight "treatment" conditions contained eight possible responses each. Results of these histograms may be found in Tables 12-19.

1. Condition I (Important Message, Important Denier, Private Context).

Repetition. The first response, repetition of initial communication, was rejected by twenty-nine percent of the fifty-two subjects. That is, fifteen subjects gave repetition a value of one, which indicated definite rejection of the response. Only nine subjects (seventeen percent) definitely chose repetition as a response to this condition (a five score). Eleven subjects (twenty-one percent) gave repetition a two and three score each; six (twelve percent) marked a four score.



Metacommunication. Most subjects did not choose metacommunication, or asking about the denial, as an appropriate response to this condition. Twenty subjects (thirty-nine percent) gave this response a one score (definite rejection). Only five subjects, or ten percent, definitely chose metacommunication with a five score; nine subjects (seventeen percent) gave metacommunication a two score; seven (fourteen percent) remained neutral with a three score. Eleven subjects (twenty-one percent) gave this response a four score.

Acceptance-Withdrawal. Acceptance-withdrawal (accepting the implication of denial) did not seem to be clearly either chosen or rejected as an appropriate response to this condition. Ten subjects, or nineteen percent, gave this response a one score (definite rejection), and eleven (twenty-one percent) gave it a five score (definite choice). Fifteen subjects (twenty-nine percent) gave acceptance a four score, indicating some degree of choice. Nine subjects were neutral with a three score (seventeen percent), and seven indicated some degree of rejection with a two score (fourteen percent). A small amount more subjects chose acceptance to some degree than rejected it.

Verbal Escalation. Most subjects definitely rejected verbal escalation as an appropriate response to this denial situation. Forty-four of the fifty-two subjects (eighty-five percent) gave this response a one score, indicating definite rejection. No subjects marked a five score, which would indicate definite choice of this response. Likewise, most subjects rejected verbal attack as an appropriate response; thirty-nine subjects, or seventy-five percent, gave it a one score,

indicating definite rejection, and ten gave it a two score, indicating some degree of rejection (nineteen percent). No subjects marked a five score for this response, which would indicate definite choice.

Physical escalation as a response to this denial situation was also definitely rejected; forty-five subjects (eighty-seven percent) gave it a one score. Only one subject chose this response by marking a five score (two percent). Personal attack was definitely rejected by fifty subjects (ninety-six percent), who marked a one score, and chosen to some degree by no subjects (a four or five score would indicate that the subject "chooses the response to some degree"). Property damage was also definitely rejected by forty-nine subjects (a one score), or ninety-four percent, and chosen to some degree by no subjects (a four or five score).

In conclusion, when the message and denier are important and the context is private, subjects tend to use acceptance-withdrawal as the most appropriate response to this denial situation, and, to a lesser extent, tend to repeat their communication. They do not tend to ask about it, use verbal escalation, verbal attack, physical escalation, property damage, or personal attack.

## 2. Condition II (Unimportant Message, Unimportant Denier, Private Context).

Repetition. Repetition was definitely chosen or definitely rejected by a similar number of subjects as a response to this condition of communication denial. Ten subjects definitely rejected repetition (nineteen percent chose a one score); eleven subjects definitely chose repetition (twenty-one percent chose a five score). Fifteen subjects

(twenty-nine percent) gave repetition a four score, indicating choice to some degree, and seven subjects (fourteen percent) gave it a two score, indicating some degree of rejection. In all, twenty-six subjects gave repetition a four or five score (fifty percent), indicating that choice of this response is appropriate to this condition.

Metacommunication. Asking about the denial (metacommunication) definitely rejected with a one score by eighty-five percent of subjects (N=52). Only four percent definitely chose metacommunication as an appropriate response to this condition.

Acceptance-withdrawal. Acceptance-withdrawal was also definitely rejected by seventy-five percent of subjects (thirty-nine subjects gave a one score in response to this condition). Again, four percent, or two subjects, definitely chose this response by marking a five score. Nineteen percent of subjects rejected acceptance-withdrawal to some degree by marking a two score (ten subjects). Thus, in all eighty-four percent of subjects indicated that acceptance-withdrawal was inappropriate to this condition of denial.

Verbal escalation. Verbal escalation was definitely rejected by eighty-seven percent of subjects (forty-five subjects gave this response a one score). Only one subject definitely chose this response as appropriate to this condition (two percent). Likewise, ninety-seven percent of subjects definitely rejected verbal attack as an appropriate response to this condition (fifty subjects marked a one score), and no subjects chose this response by marking a five score. Physical

escalation was definitely rejected by an identical percentage and number of subjects, and again, no subjects gave this response a four or five score, which would indicate some degree of choice.

Property damage was definitely rejected as an appropriate response by fifty-two percent of subjects (twenty-seven subjects marked a one score). Twenty-four percent (twelve subjects) gave this response a two score, indicating some degree of rejection. Ten percent of subjects gave property damage a five score, indicating definite choice of this response for this condition (five subjects).

In general, subjects chose only repetition and personal attack as appropriate responses to the communication denial condition including an unimportant message and denier and private context. All other possible responses tended to be rejected by subjects.

### 3. Condition III (Unimportant Message, Important Denier, Public Context).

Repetition. Repetition was definitely rejected as an appropriate response to this condition; seventy-five percent of subjects gave repetition a one score, indicating definite rejection of this response (N=52). Nineteen percent of subjects gave repetition a two score, indicating rejection to some degree (N=52). No subjects marked a five score for this response, which would indicate definite choice.

Metacommunication. Asking about the denial was also definitely rejected by eighty-seven percent of subjects (forty-five subjects marked a one score for this response). Only one subject gave this response a five score, indicating definite choice (two percent).

Acceptance-withdrawal. Acceptance-withdrawal was also definitely rejected by ninety-six percent of subjects (fifty subjects marked a one score) as an appropriate response to this condition. No subjects marked a four or five score, which would indicate some degree of choice.

Verbal Escalation. Verbal escalation was also definitely rejected as a response to this condition; ninety-four percent of subjects gave this response a one score (N=52). Again, no subjects chose a four or five score, which would indicate some degree of choice.

Verbal Attack. Verbal attack was definitely chosen as an appropriate response to this condition by fifty-two percent of subjects (twenty-seven subjects marked a five score). Fourteen percent of subjects gave this response a four score, indicating some degree of choice (N=52). Only six subjects (twelve percent) definitely rejected this response with a one score. It appears that subjects chose verbal attack as a response to the third condition of denial above all other possible responses.

Thirty-nine percent of subjects definitely rejected personal attack as an appropriate response to this condition (twenty subjects marked a one score). Twenty-one percent definitely chose this response (eleven subjects gave it a five score). More subjects rejected this response than chose it for this denial condition.

Eighty-five percent of subjects definitely rejected property damage as a response to this condition (forty-four subjects marked a one score). Only one subject definitely chose this response by marking a five score.

In conclusion, it seems that verbal attack is the response

definitely chosen by most subjects as the most appropriate response to a communication denial situation that involves an unimportant message, an important denier, and a public context. All other possible responses were rejected as appropriate to this condition of denial.

4. Condition IV (Unimportant Message, Unimportant Denier, Public Context).

Repetition. Repetition was definitely rejected by ninety-six percent of subjects (fifty subjects gave this response a one score). No subjects chose this response to some degree by marking a four or five score. Ninety-four percent of subjects (forty-nine) definitely rejected metacommunication, or asking about the denial, by indicating a one score. No subjects chose metacommunication to any degree.

Acceptance-withdrawal. Acceptance-withdrawal was chosen definitely by fifty-two percent, or twenty-seven subjects, by indicating a five score. Fourteen percent (N=52) chose acceptance to some degree by marking a four score. Only twelve percent of subjects chose a one score, indicating definite rejection (N=52), and fourteen percent chose a two score, indicating rejection to some degree (N=52). Almost three times the number of subjects rejecting this response to some degree chose acceptance-withdrawal to some degree as an appropriate response.

Fifty-two percent (twenty-seven subjects) definitely rejected verbal escalation by marking a one score; twenty-three percent (N=52) chose a two score, indicating some degree of rejection. Only ten percent of subjects (N=52) definitely chose this response with a five score. Likewise, most subjects rejected verbal attack to some degree (thirty-nine percent chose a one score; ten percent chose a two score; N=52).

However, twenty-one percent of subjects did definitely choose verbal attack as an appropriate response (eleven subjects marked a five score).

Eighty-seven percent of subjects definitely rejected physical escalation as a response to this condition; forty-four subjects marked a one score. Only one subject marked a five score, indicating definite choice. Ninety-six percent of subjects definitely rejected personal attack as a response (fifty subjects indicated a one score). No subjects chose this response to any degree by marking a four or five score. Similarly, eighty-nine percent of subjects also definitely rejected property damage as a response by indicating a one score (forty-four subjects).

In general, it appears that acceptance-withdrawal is chosen by subjects as the most appropriate response to a communication denial situation including an unimportant message and denier and a public context. All other responses were rejected as appropriate.

5. Condition V (Important Message, Unimportant Denier, Public Context).

Repetition. Repetition was definitely chosen by fifty-two percent of subjects (twenty-seven subjects chose a five score). An additional fourteen percent chose this response to some degree by marking a four score (N=52). Only twelve percent of subjects definitely rejected this response by marking a one score (six subjects). The same number of subjects which chose repetition to some degree rejected it to some degree by marking a two score.

Fifty-two percent of subjects definitely rejected metacommunication as a response to this condition (twenty-seven subjects chose a one score). Twenty-three percent rejected metacommunication to some degree with a two score (N=52). Only five subjects definitely chose this response by marking a five score (ten percent).

Thirty-nine percent of subjects definitely rejected acceptance-withdrawal as an appropriate response to this condition. Twenty subjects chose a one score. Ten percent rejected it to some degree (five subjects), and twenty-one percent definitely chose this response as appropriate to this condition (eleven subjects marked a five score). More subjects rejected acceptance-withdrawal than chose it.

Eighty-five percent of subjects definitely rejected verbal escalation as an appropriate response (forty-four subjects indicated a one score). Only one subject definitely chose this response. Ninety-seven percent of subjects definitely rejected verbal attack as a response (N=52); no subjects marked a four or five score, which would indicate choice to some degree. Eighty-nine percent of subjects definitely rejected physical escalation with one scores (N=52); only one subject indicated a five score, or definite choice. Ninety-eight percent of subjects definitely rejected personal attack as a response; (N=52); and no subjects chose personal attack to any degree by indicating a four or five score. The same number of subjects definitely rejected property damage as a response, and, again, no subjects chose this response to any degree at all.

In general, it appears that repetition is chosen most frequently in response to a denial situation including an important message, an



unimportant denier, and a public context.

6. Condition VI (Important Message, Important Denier, Public Context).

Repetition is definitely rejected by thirty-nine percent of subjects as appropriate to this condition; twenty subjects gave repetition a one score. Ten percent of subjects gave repetition a four score, indicating choice to some degree (N=52). Twenty-one percent of subjects gave this response a five score, indicating definite choice, (N=52), and twelve percent gave it a two score, indicating rejection to some degree (N=52). More subjects rejected repetition than chose it for this condition.

Eighty-five percent of subjects definitely rejected metacommunication as a response with a one score (N=52). Only one subject definitely chose metacommunication by marking a five score. Ninety-six percent of subjects definitely rejected acceptance-withdrawal as an appropriate response to this condition (fifty subjects marked a one score). No subjects chose this response to any degree at all.

Eighty-nine percent of subjects definitely rejected verbal escalation as a response by marking a one score; only one subject definitely chose this response by marking a five score (N=52). Ninety-seven percent of subjects (N=52) definitely rejected verbal attack as an appropriate response; no subjects marked a five score, which would indicate definite choice. The same number of subjects definitely rejected physical escalation as a response, and, again, no subjects definitely chose physical escalation.

However, forty-six percent of subjects definitely chose personal attack as an appropriate response to this condition (twenty-four subjects marked a five score). Fifteen percent chose this response to some degree by marking a four score (N=52). Only seventeen percent of subjects definitely rejected this response with a one score, and fourteen percent rejected it to some degree with a two score (N=52 in each case). Twice as many subjects chose this response to some degree than rejected it to some degree.

Sixty-five percent of subjects definitely rejected property damage as a response by indicating a one score (N=52); six percent indicated rejection to some degree with a two score (N=52). Seven percent of subjects definitely chose this response by indicating a five score (N=52); fourteen percent gave this response a three score, indicating a neutral position (N=52).

All responses except personal attack were rejected to some degree by more subjects than chosen to some degree. Metacommunication, verbal escalation, verbal attack, physical escalation, and property damage were definitely rejected by large percentages of subjects. More subjects rejected repetition, acceptance-withdrawal, and property damage to some degree than chose these responses to some degree. However, less subjects definitely rejected property damage as a response than in prior denial conditions. Personal attack seems to be the response favored when the message is important, the denier is important, and the context is public (twice as many subjects chose this response to some degree than rejected it to some degree in answer to this denial situation).

7. Condition VII (Important Message, Unimportant Denier, Private Context).

Ninety-seven percent of subjects gave repetition a one score, indicating definite rejection of this response for this condition. (N=52). No subjects chose a five score for repetition. Eighty-nine percent of subjects (N=52) also definitely rejected metacommunication by indicating a one score; only one subject definitely chose metacommunication by marking a five score. Ninety-eight percent of subjects definitely rejected acceptance-withdrawal as a response to this denial situation by indicating a one score (N=52); no subjects chose this response to any degree at all. The same number of subjects definitely rejected verbal escalation as a response, and likewise, no subjects indicated any degree of choice for this response.

Forty-six percent of subjects definitely chose verbal attack as a response to this denial situation (twenty-four subjects marked a five score). An additional fifteen percent chose this response to some degree by indicating a four score (N=52). Only seventeen percent of subjects indicated a one score, or definite rejection (N=52), and fourteen percent of subjects indicated some degree of rejection with a two score (N=52). Twice as many subjects chose this response to some degree than rejected it to some degree.

Thirty-eight percent of subjects definitely rejected physical escalation as a response by indicating a one score (N=52); fourteen percent rejected it to some degree with a two score (N=52). However, twenty-three percent definitely chose this response with a five score (N=52), and sixteen percent chose it to some degree with a four score (N=52). Almost as many subjects chose this response as rejected it,

although more subjects rejected this response to some degree than chose it to some degree.

Forty-four percent of subjects definitely rejected personal attack as a response by indicating a one score (N=52); nineteen percent rejected it to some degree with a two score (N=52). Only fifteen percent definitely chose it with a five score (N=52); ten percent chose it to some degree with a four score (N=52). Almost three times as many subjects rejected this response to some degree than chose it to some degree.

Sixty-five percent of subjects definitely rejected property damage as a response with a one score (N=52). Eight percent (N=52) definitely chose it with a five score, and fourteen percent of subjects gave property damage a three score, indicating a neutral position (N=52).

The only response chosen (to some degree) more than rejected (to some degree) by subjects was verbal attack, in response to a denial condition including an important message, an unimportant denier, and a private context. However, more subjects chose physical escalation, personal attack, and property damage (to some degree) than in preceding denial conditions.

#### 8. Condition VIII (Unimportant Message, Important Denier, Private Context).

Ninety-eight percent of subjects definitely rejected repetition as an appropriate response to this denial condition by indicating a one score (fifty-one subjects). The one remaining subject gave this response a five score, indicating definite choice. The same percentages of subjects definitely rejected and definitely chose metacommunication.

Forty-six percent of subjects definitely chose acceptance-withdrawal as an appropriate response by marking a five score (N=52). An additional fifteen percent indicated choice to some degree with a four score (N=52). Seventeen percent definitely rejected this response with a one score (N=52), and fourteen percent rejected it to some degree with a two score (N=52). Twice as many subjects chose this response to some degree than rejected it to some degree.

Thirty-nine percent of subjects definitely rejected verbal escalation (twenty subjects marked a one score). An additional fourteen percent rejected it to some degree with a two score (N=52). Twenty-three percent of subjects definitely chose this response; twelve subjects marked a five score. Fifteen percent (N=52) chose it to some degree by marking a four score. More subjects rejected this response than chose it, but the difference is slight.

Forty-four percent of subjects definitely rejected verbal attack as an appropriate response to this situation by marking a one score. (N=52). An additional ten subjects gave this response a two score, indicating rejection to some degree. Fifteen percent of subjects (N=52) definitely chose verbal attack by marking a five score. Almost three times as many subjects rejected this response than chose it.

Sixty-five percent of subjects (N=52) definitely rejected physical escalation as an appropriate response by marking a one score. An additional six percent rejected it to some degree with a two score (N=52). Only eight percent of subjects gave this response a five score (N=52).

Sixty-five percent of subjects (N=52) also definitely rejected personal attack with a five score; an additional eight percent rejected

it to some degree with a two score (N=52). Six percent of subjects definitely chose this response with a five score (N=52). Ninety-two percent of subjects definitely rejected property damage as a response with a one score (N=52); no subjects chose this response.

All responses except acceptance-withdrawal were definitely rejected by subjects. Twice as many subjects chose acceptance-withdrawal to some degree than rejected it to some degree. However, as in the preceding denial condition, more subjects marked verbal escalation, verbal attack, physical escalation, and personal attack as choices to some degree in response to this denial situation than in the first six conditions. It appears that the most usual response to a denial condition including an unimportant message, an important denier, and a private context, is acceptance-withdrawal.

#### 10. General Conclusions.

Personal attack is considered by subjects to be the most appropriate response to two denial conditions: (1) Unimportant message and denier, private context; (2) Important message and denier, public context. Similarity of levels within each condition are probably decisive factors in choice of this response to these two denial conditions.

Repetition tends to be favored in two conditions: (1) Unimportant message and denier, private context; (2) Important message, unimportant denier, and public context. Message and contextual variables must influence choice of this response for these two conditions of denial.

Verbal attack is chosen in two conditions: (1) Unimportant message, important denier, public context; (2) Important message, unimportant denier, private context. The second condition is an exact reversal of the first, and levels of message and denier variables differ within each condition. These factors influence response choice.

Acceptance-withdrawal is chosen as the most appropriate response to three conditions: (1) Important message and denier, private context; (2) Unimportant message and denier, public context; (3) Unimportant message, important denier, private context. Reasons for choice of this response for these three conditions will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Physical responses (physical escalation, personal attack, and property damage) are chosen at high rates for two conditions, although more subjects rejected these responses for these two conditions than chose them: (1) Unimportant message, important denier, private context; (2) Important message, unimportant denier, private context. These responses appear to receive high choice ratings when the context is private and when levels of the message and denier variables differ and reverse. These responses are chosen much more often in the last two denial conditions than in the first six. Reasons for choice of all responses for each condition will be discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

C. Summary of Histogram Results. Eight different conditions were presented to subjects, and subjects were asked to respond to each of the eight denial conditions in terms of eight different responses for each condition (responses were the same, however, for each condition). Subjects were asked to rate each of the eight responses for each of the eight conditions on a one-to-five scale; one indicating that the subjects generally would not choose this response as appropriate behavior in responding to communication denial (indicating definite rejection of the response); two indicating that the subject would reject the response to some degree, but not definitely; three indicating a neutral choice position, neither choosing nor rejecting the response; four indicating that the subject would choose the response to some degree, but not definitely, and five indicating that the subject generally would choose the response as appropriate behavior in responding to communication denial (indicating definite choice of the response).

#### General Conclusions:

1. Condition I: When the message and denier are important, and the context is private, subjects tend to choose acceptance-withdrawal as the most appropriate response to this denial situation. Other responses are viewed as inappropriate for this denial situation.

2. Condition II: When the message and denier are unimportant and the context is private, subjects tend to choose repetition and personal attack as the most appropriate response to this denial



situation. All other possible responses were viewed as inappropriate to this denial situation. Almost as many subjects rejected repetition as chose repetition; thus, the marked choice of subjects for an appropriate response to this denial situation is personal attack.

3. Condition III: When the message is unimportant, the denier important, and the context public, subjects choose verbal attack as the most appropriate response to this denial situation. All other possible responses were viewed as inappropriate to this denial situation.

4. Condition IV: When the message is unimportant, the denier is unimportant, and the context is public, subjects tend to use acceptance-withdrawal as the most appropriate response to this denial situation. All other responses were viewed as inappropriate; however, verbal attack received high choice rates, although twice as many subjects rejected verbal attack than chose it.

5. Condition V: When the message is important, the denier unimportant, and the context public, subjects choose repetition as the most appropriate response to this denial situation. All other possible responses were viewed as inappropriate to this denial situation.

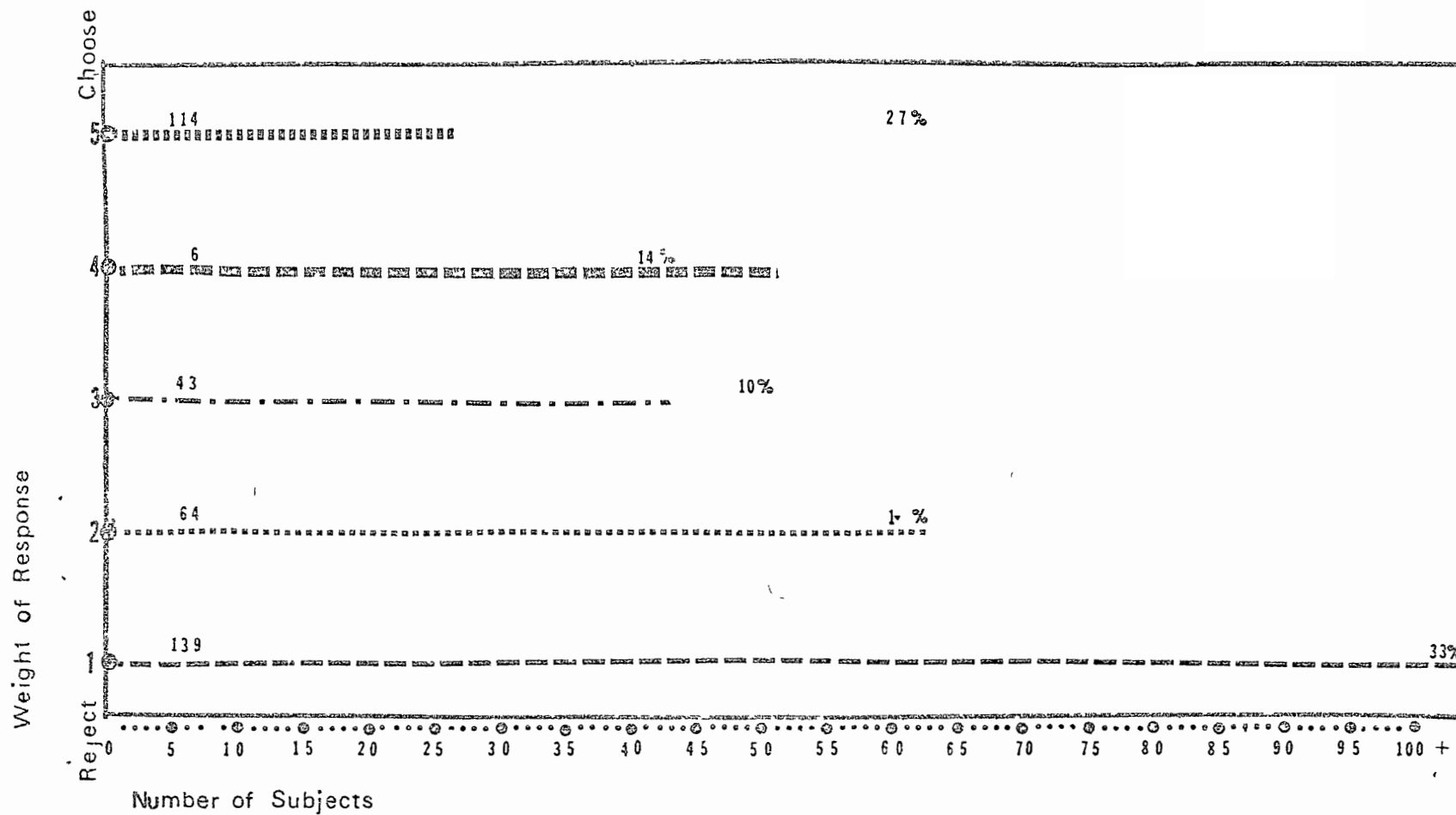
6. Condition VI: When the message and denier are important and the context is public, subjects favor personal attack as the most appropriate response to this denial condition. All other possible responses were viewed as inappropriate; however, property damage did receive higher choice rates than in prior conditions of denial, although property damage was rejected by a large percentage of subjects.

7. Condition VII: When the message is important, the denier unimportant, and the context private, subjects choose verbal attack as the most appropriate response to this denial situation. All other possible responses were rejected; however, physical escalation, personal attack, and property damage received higher choice ratings than in prior situations, although these responses were still perceived as inappropriate to this situation.

8. Condition VIII: When the message is unimportant, the denier important, and the context private, subjects favor acceptance-withdrawal as the most appropriate response to this situation of denial. All other possible responses were viewed as inappropriate to this situation, although, as in Condition VII, physical attack responses received higher choice ratings than in the first six conditions, although these responses were still viewed as inappropriate for this situation by most subjects.

When histograms were analyzed for each dependent variable, or response, results indicated that repetition and acceptance-withdrawal were the responses considered most appropriate to all denial situations by subjects. However, when histograms were analyzed for each response for each situation, results indicated that repetition is favored for only two situations, and that acceptance-withdrawal is favored for three situations. Personal attack is the favored response for two conditions of denial, and verbal attack is favored for two situations as well. It appears that histogram results are supportive of each other and indicate that for some conditions of denial, common communicative responses are favored (repetition and

acceptance-withdrawal) favored, but, for others, "attack" responses (verbal and personal attack) are favored. Tables 4-11 on the following pages indicate histogram results for each response, and Tables 12-19 on the following pages indicate histogram results for each response for each situation of communication denial.



REPETITION  
TABLE 4

OVERALL HISTOGRAM DATA FOR REPETITION

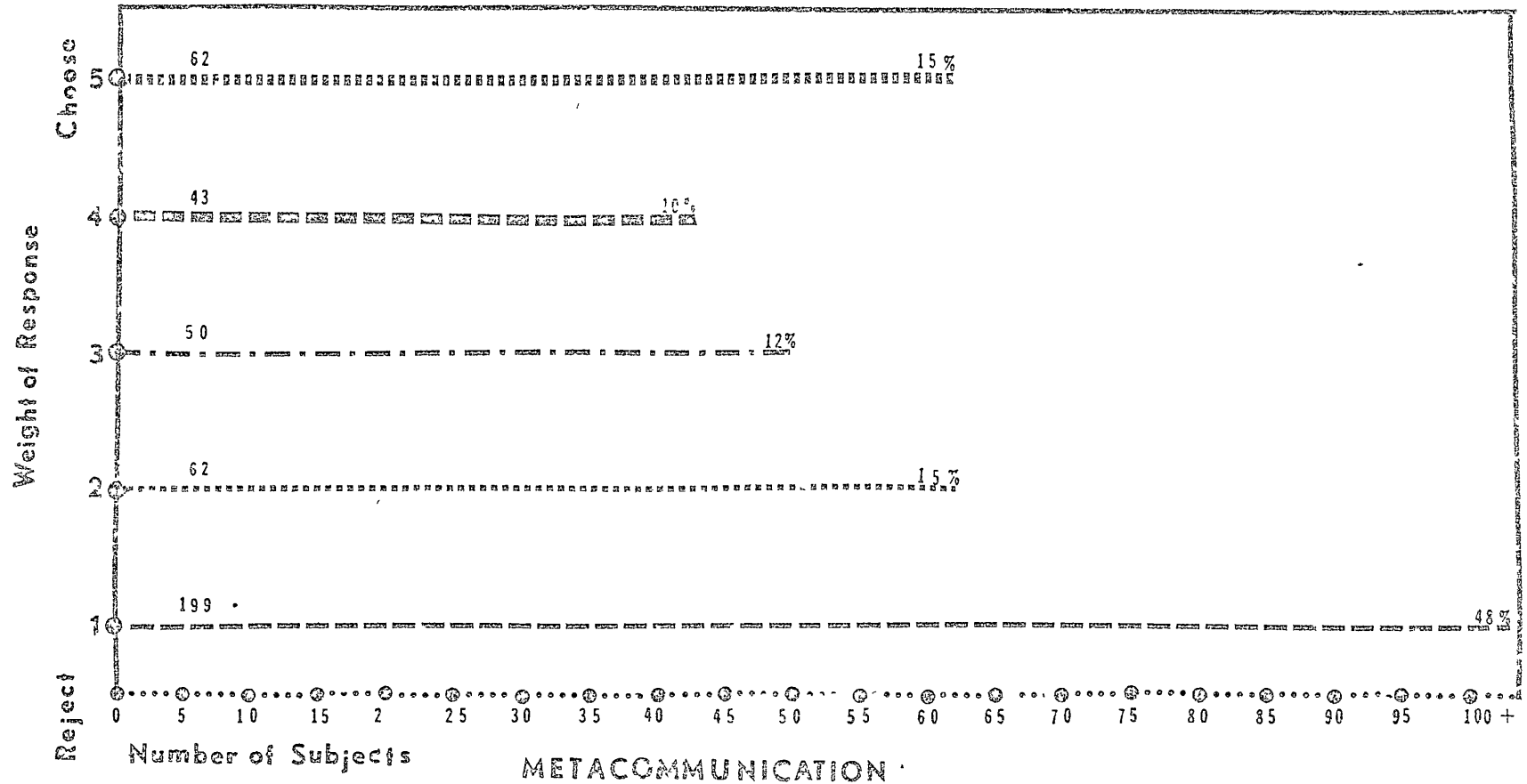
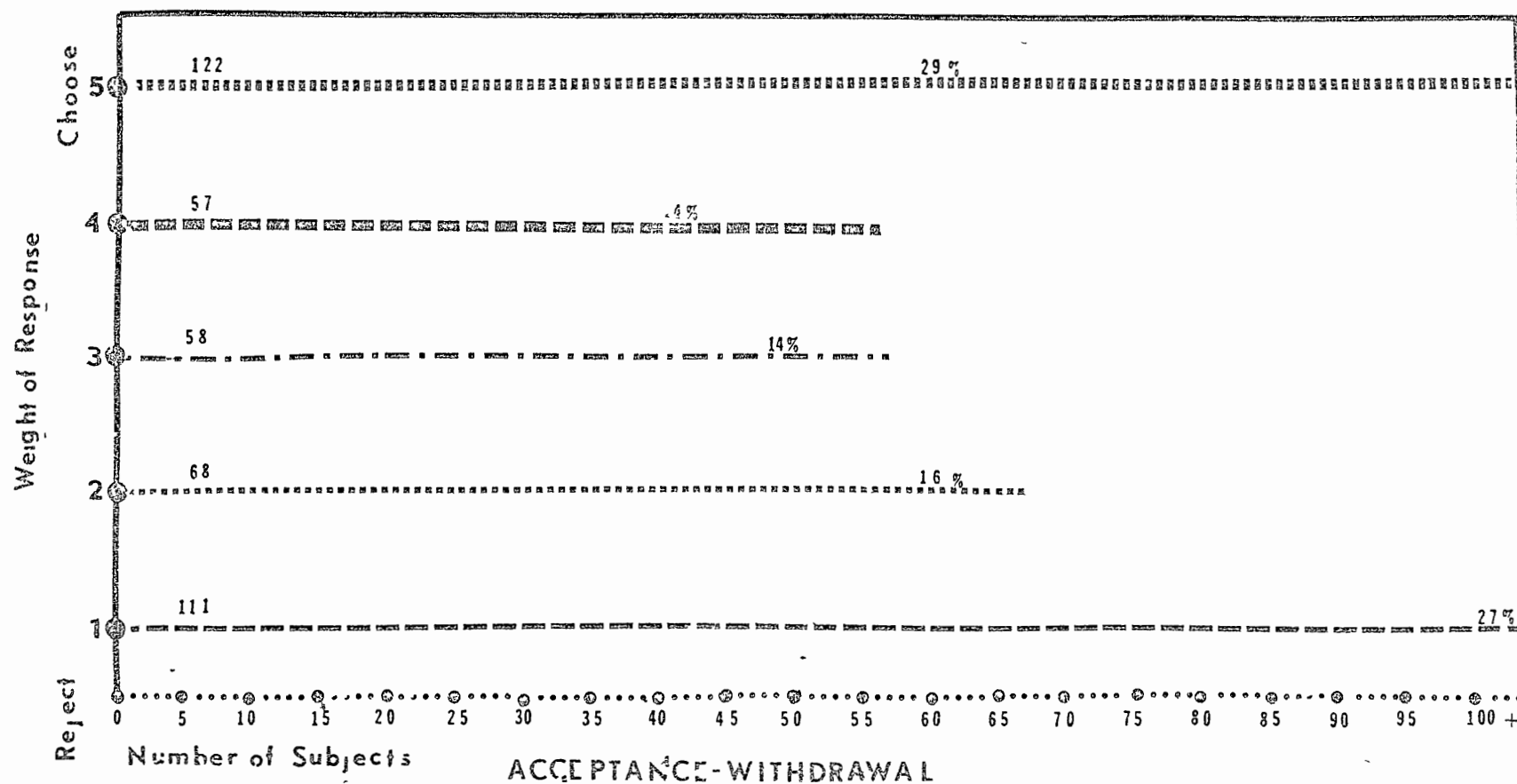


TABLE 5

OVERALL HISTOGRAM DATA FOR METACOMMUNICATION



**TABLE 6**

OVERALL HISTOGRAM DATA FOR ACCEPTANCE-WITHDRAWAL

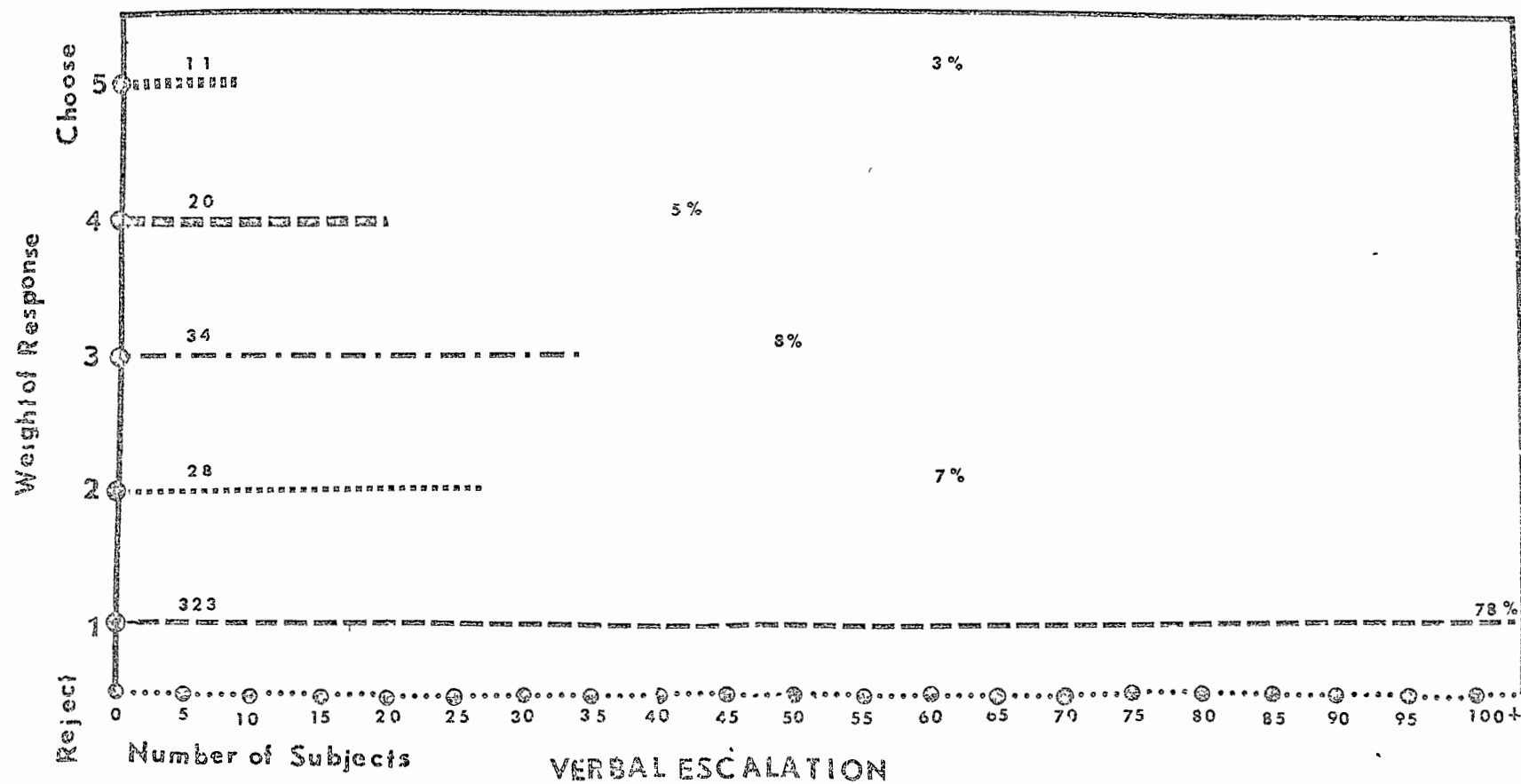


TABLE 7

OVERALL HISTOGRAM DATA FOR VERBAL ESCALATION

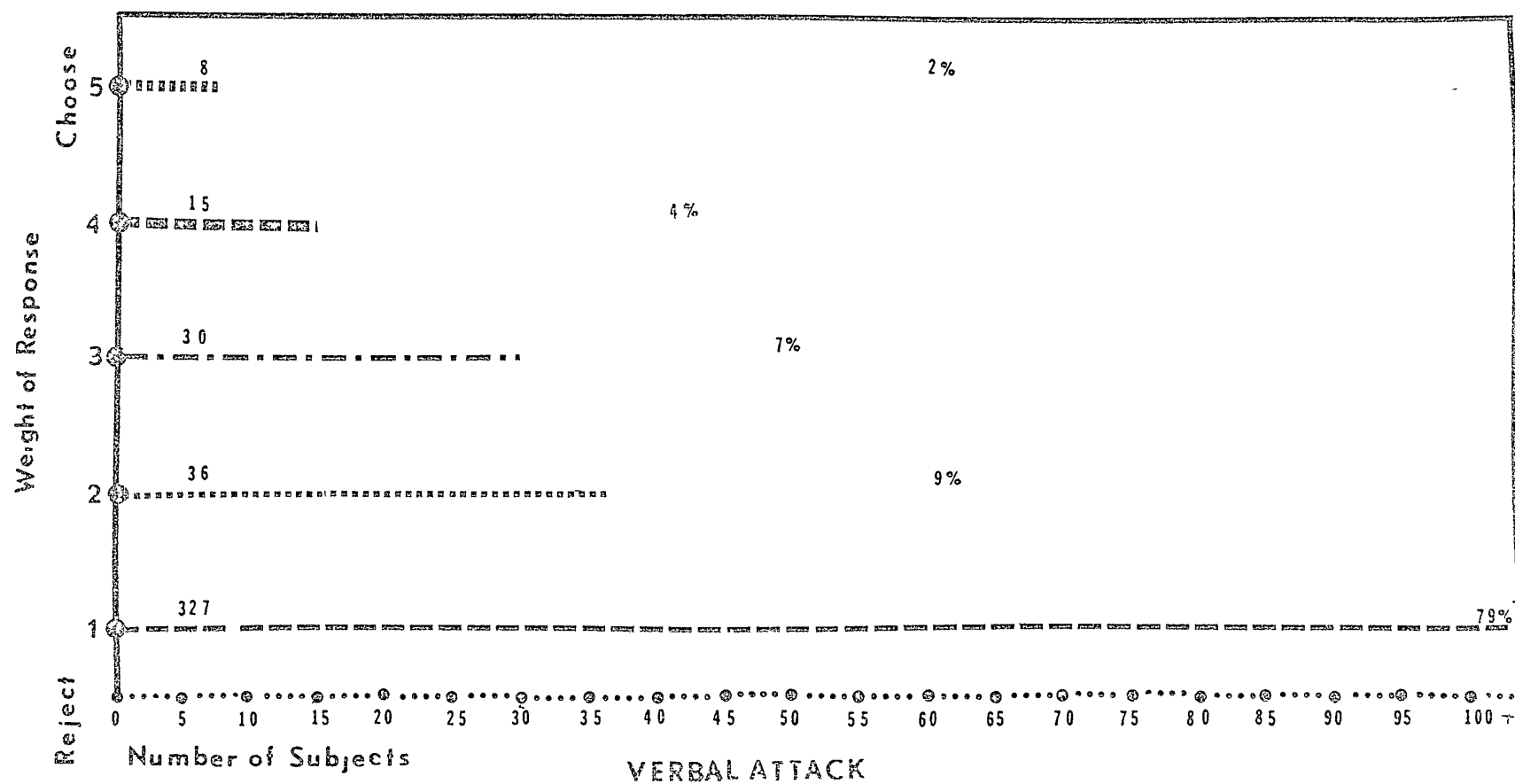
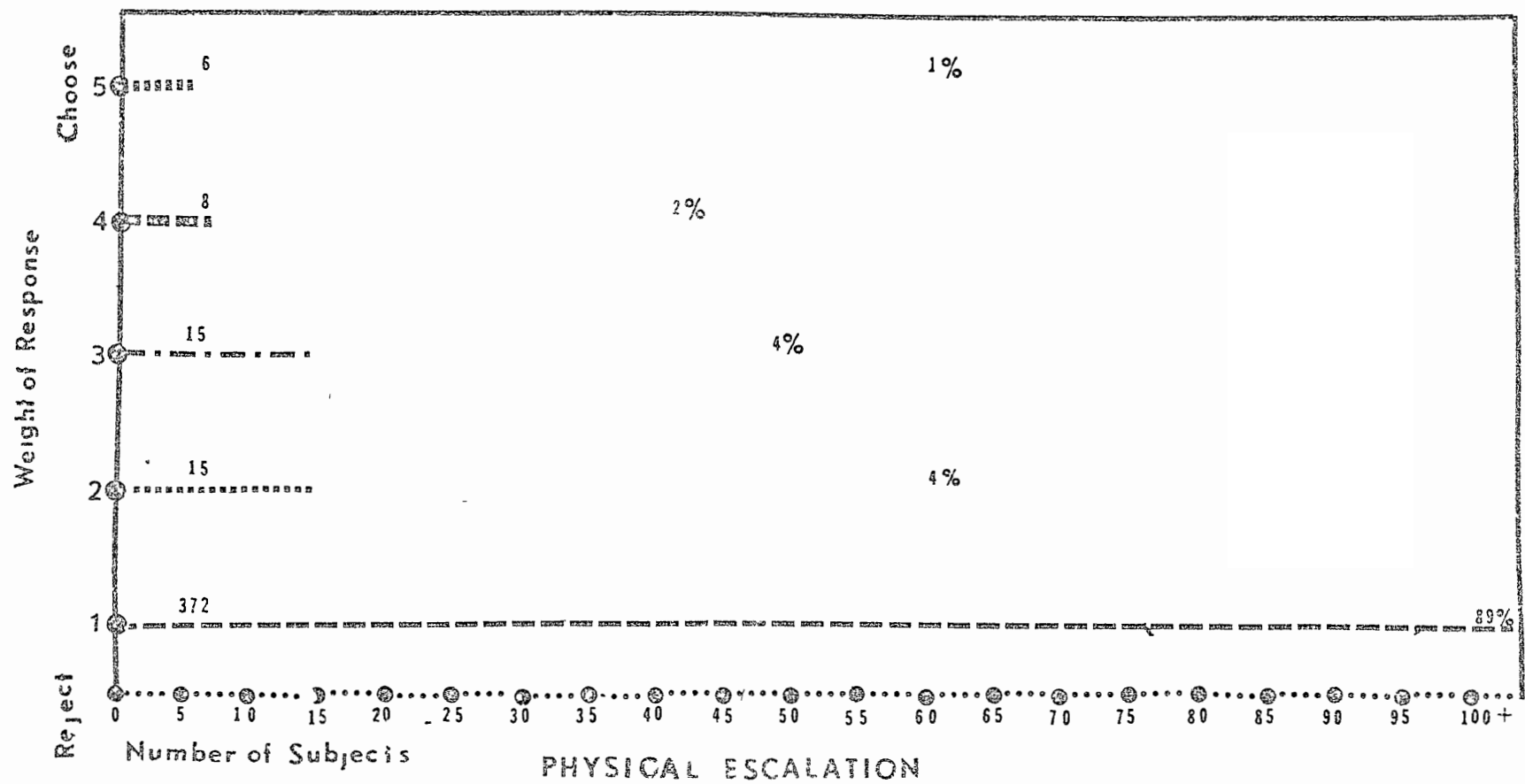


TABLE 8

OVERALL HISTOGRAM DATA FOR VERBAL ATTACK





**TABLE 9**

OVERALL HISTOGRAM DATA FOR PHYSICAL ESCALATION

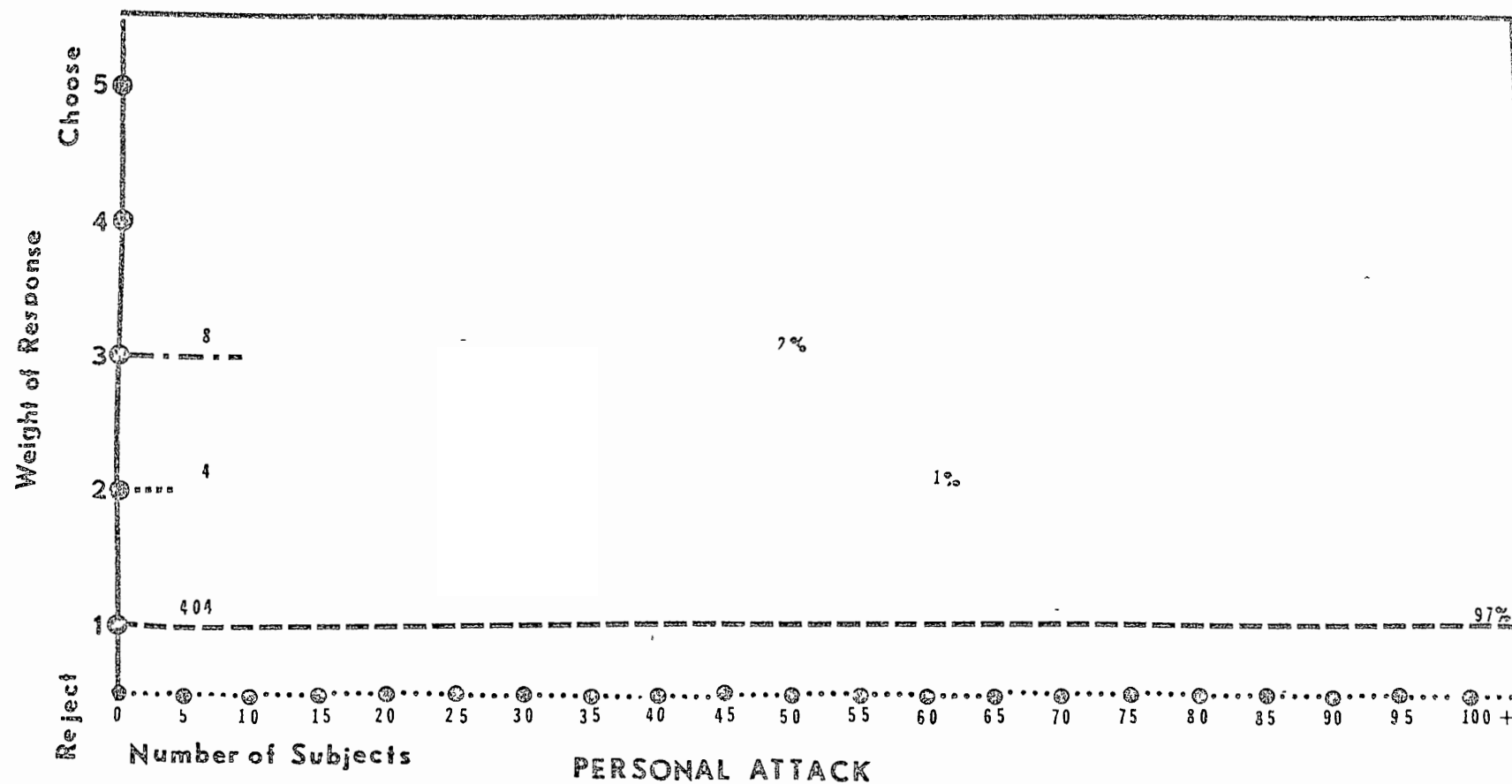
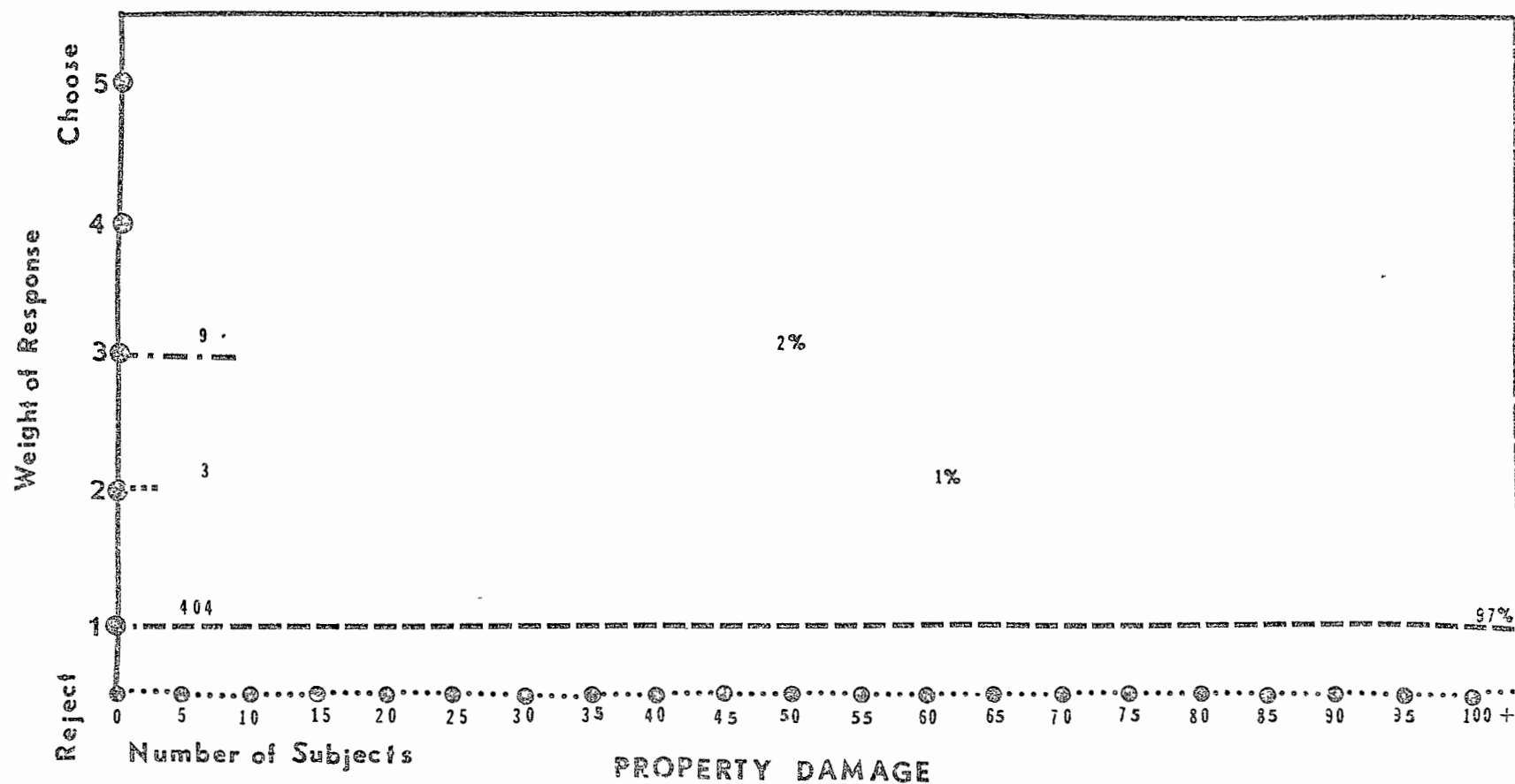


TABLE 10

OVERALL HISTOGRAM DATA FOR PERSONAL ATTACK



**TABLE 11**

OVERALL HISTOGRAM DATA FOR PROPERTY DAMAGE

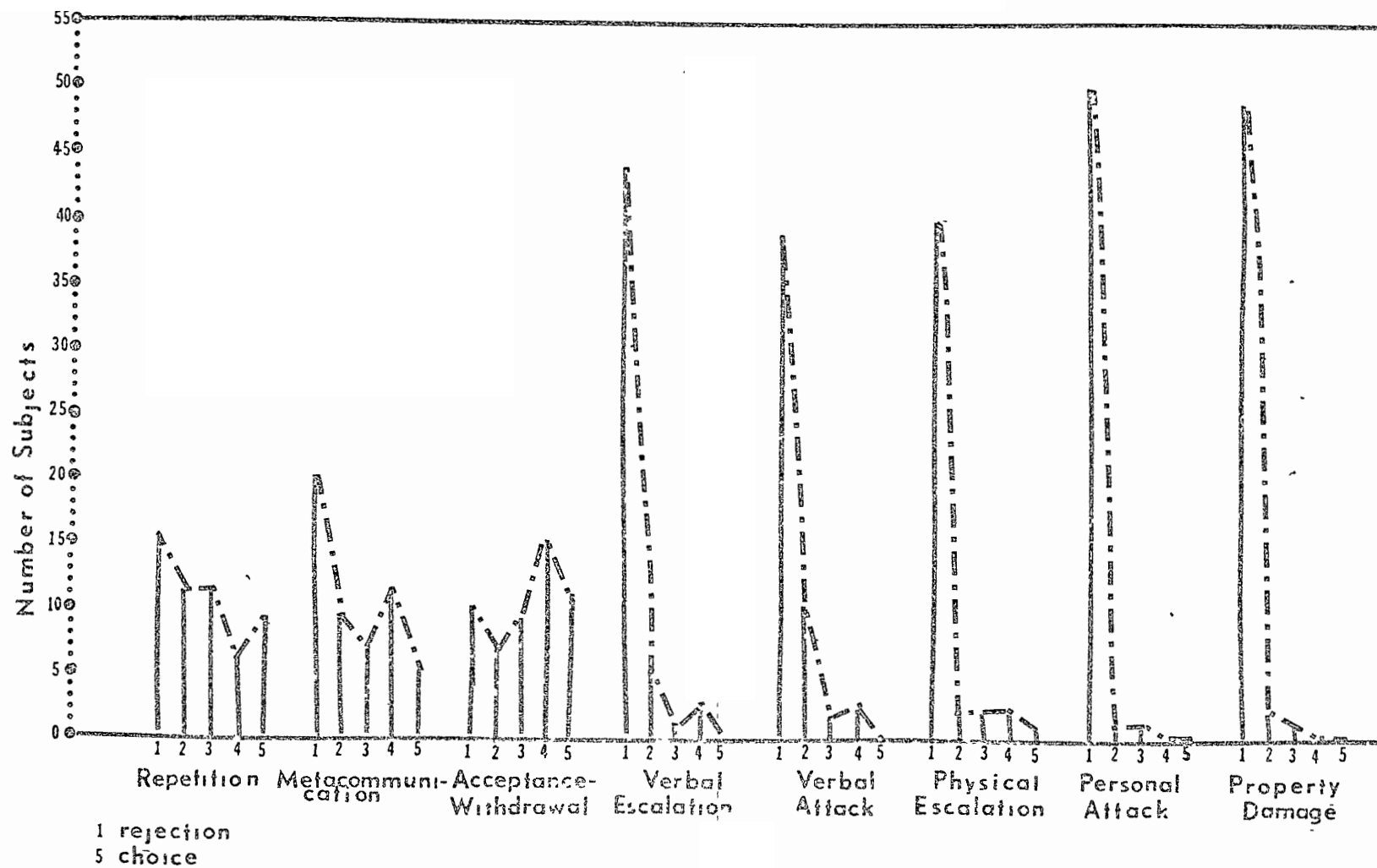


TABLE 12 (CONDITION I)

HISTOGRAM DATA FOR CONDITION I (IMPORTANT MESSAGE, IMPORTANT DENIER, PRIVATE CONTEXT)

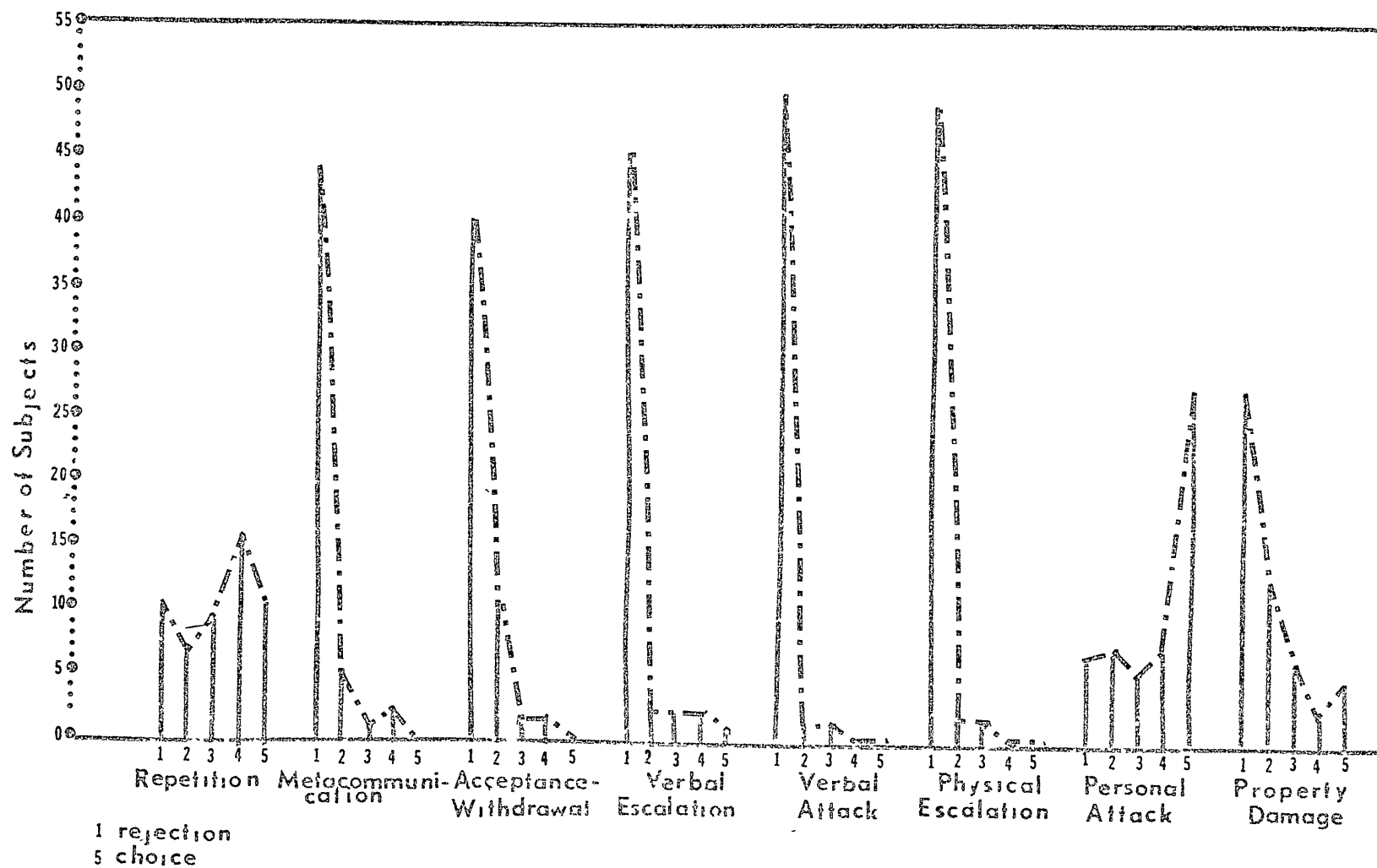


TABLE 13 (CONDITION II)

HISTOGRAM DATA FOR CONDITION II (UNIMPORTANT MESSAGE, UNIMPORTANT DENIER, PRIVATE CONTEXT)

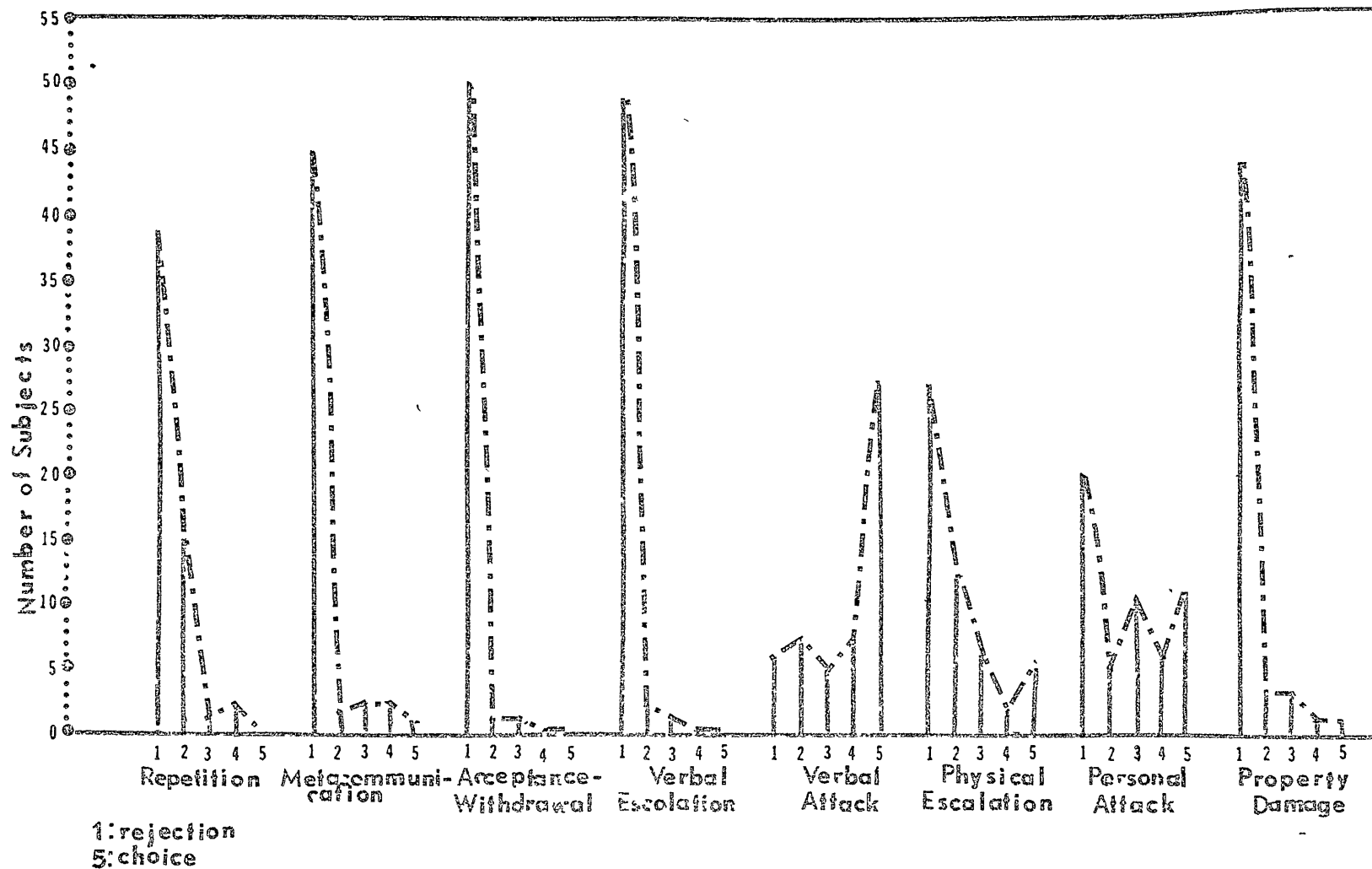


TABLE 14 (CONDITION III)

HISTOGRAM DATA FOR CONDITION III (UNIMPORTANT MESSAGE, IMPORTANT DENIER, GROUP CONTEXT)

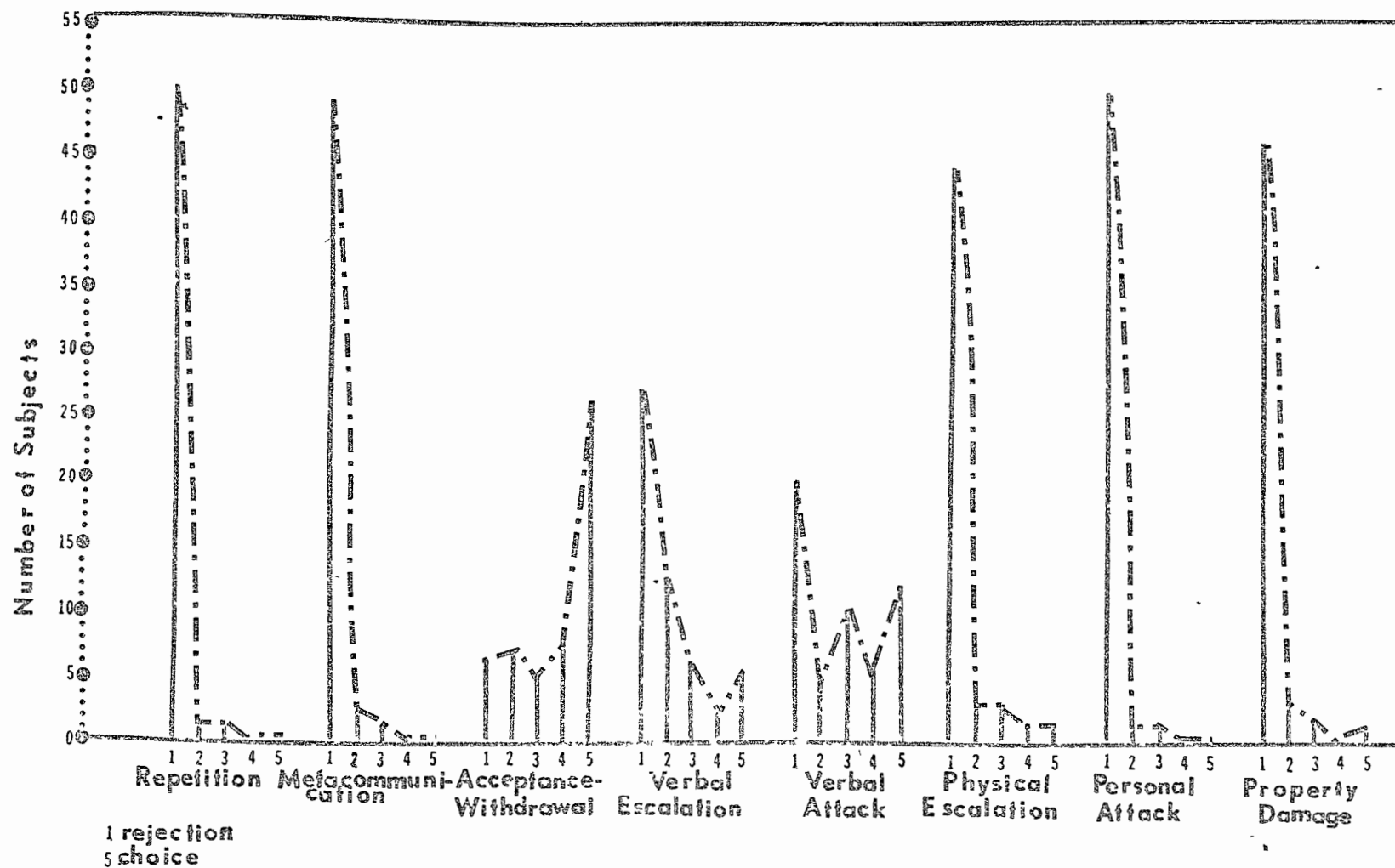


TABLE 15 (CONDITION IV)

HISTOGRAM DATA FOR CONDITION IV (UNIMPORTANT MESSAGE, UNIMPORTANT DENIER, GROUP CONTEXT)

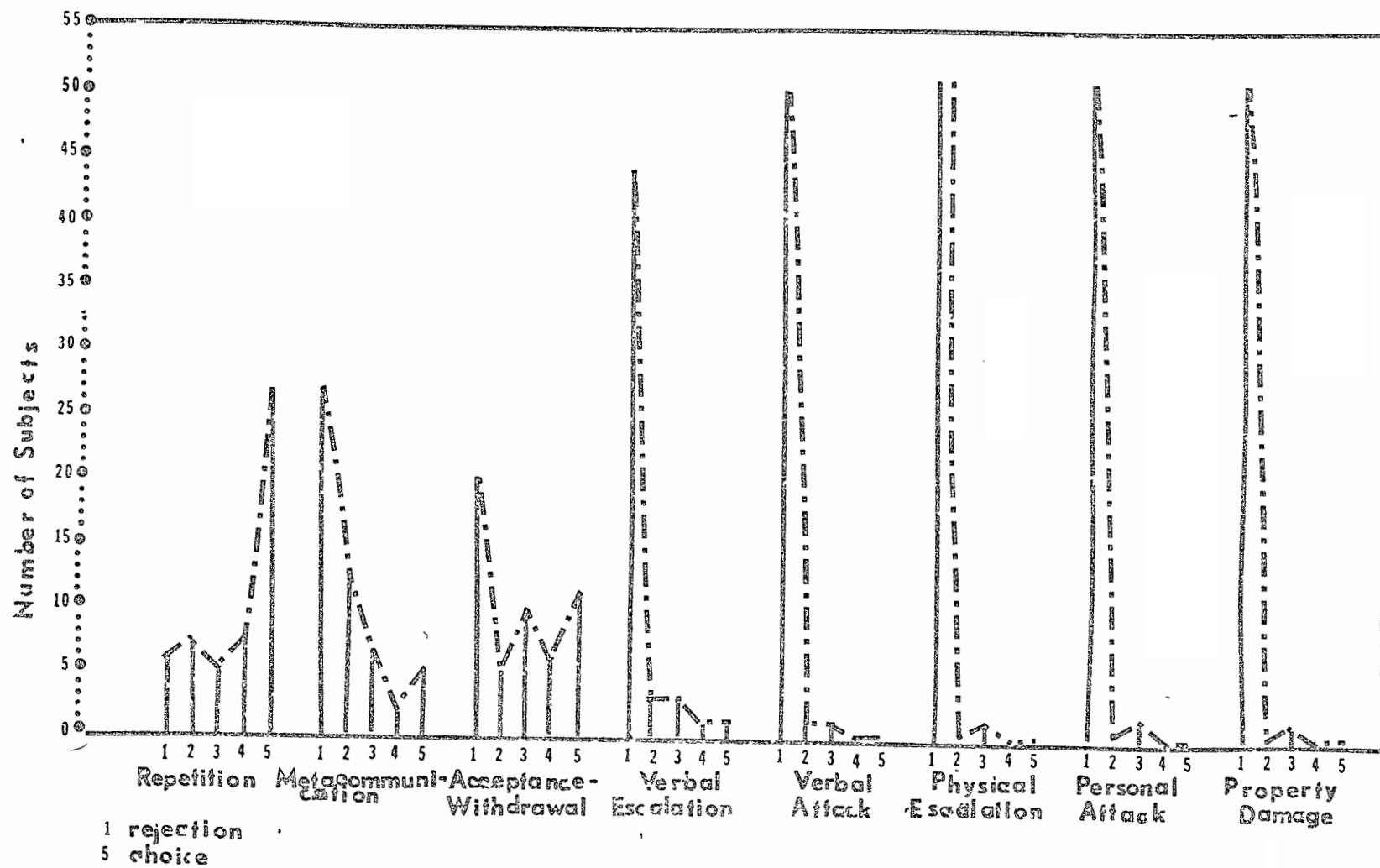


TABLE 16 (CONDITION V)

HISTOGRAM DATA FOR CONDITION V (IMPORTANT MESSAGE, UNIMPORTANT DENIER, GROUP CONTEXT)



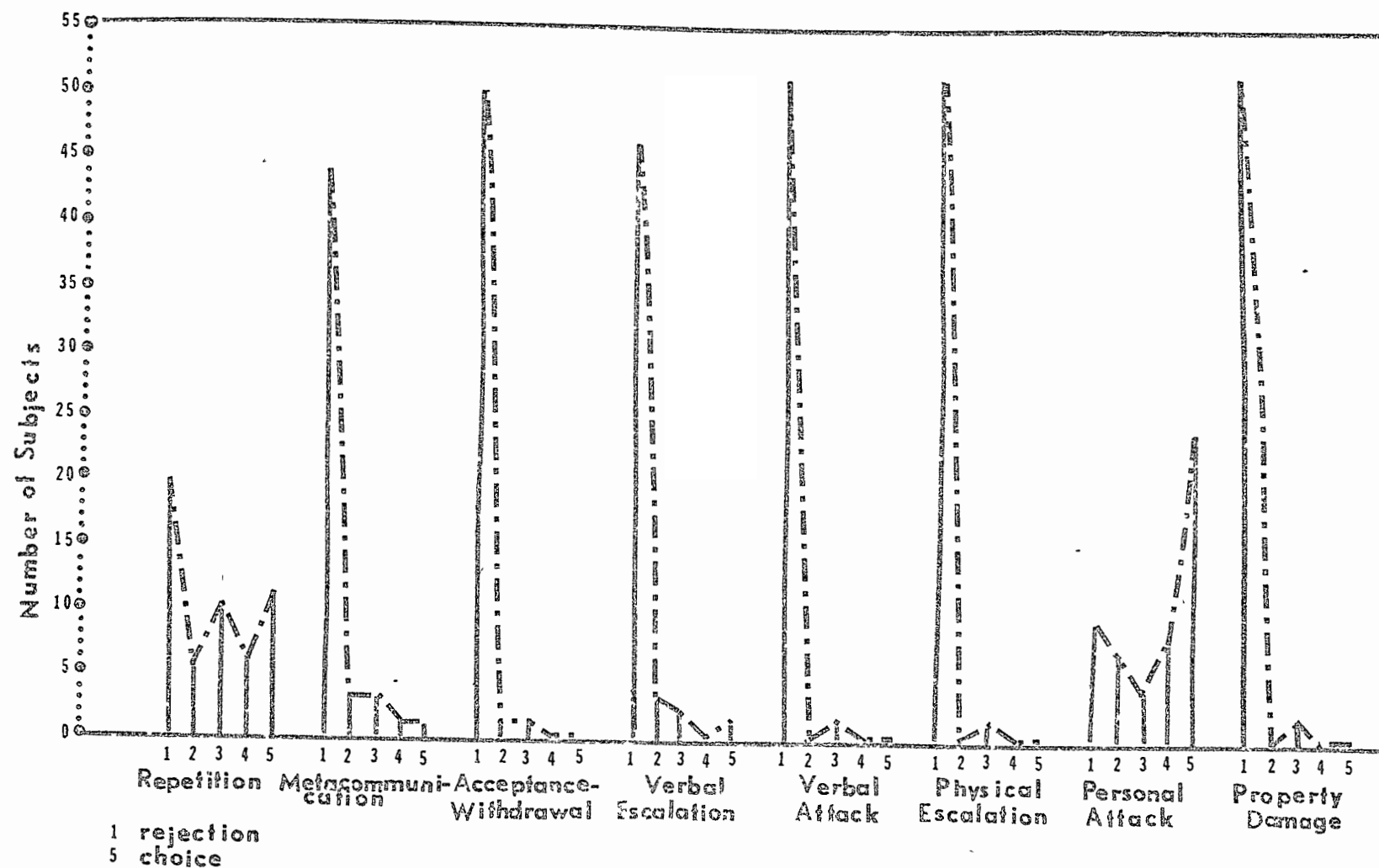


TABLE 17 (CONDITION VI)

HISTOGRAM DATA FOR CONDITION VI (IMPORTANT MESSAGE, IMPORTANT DENIER, GROUP CONTEXT)

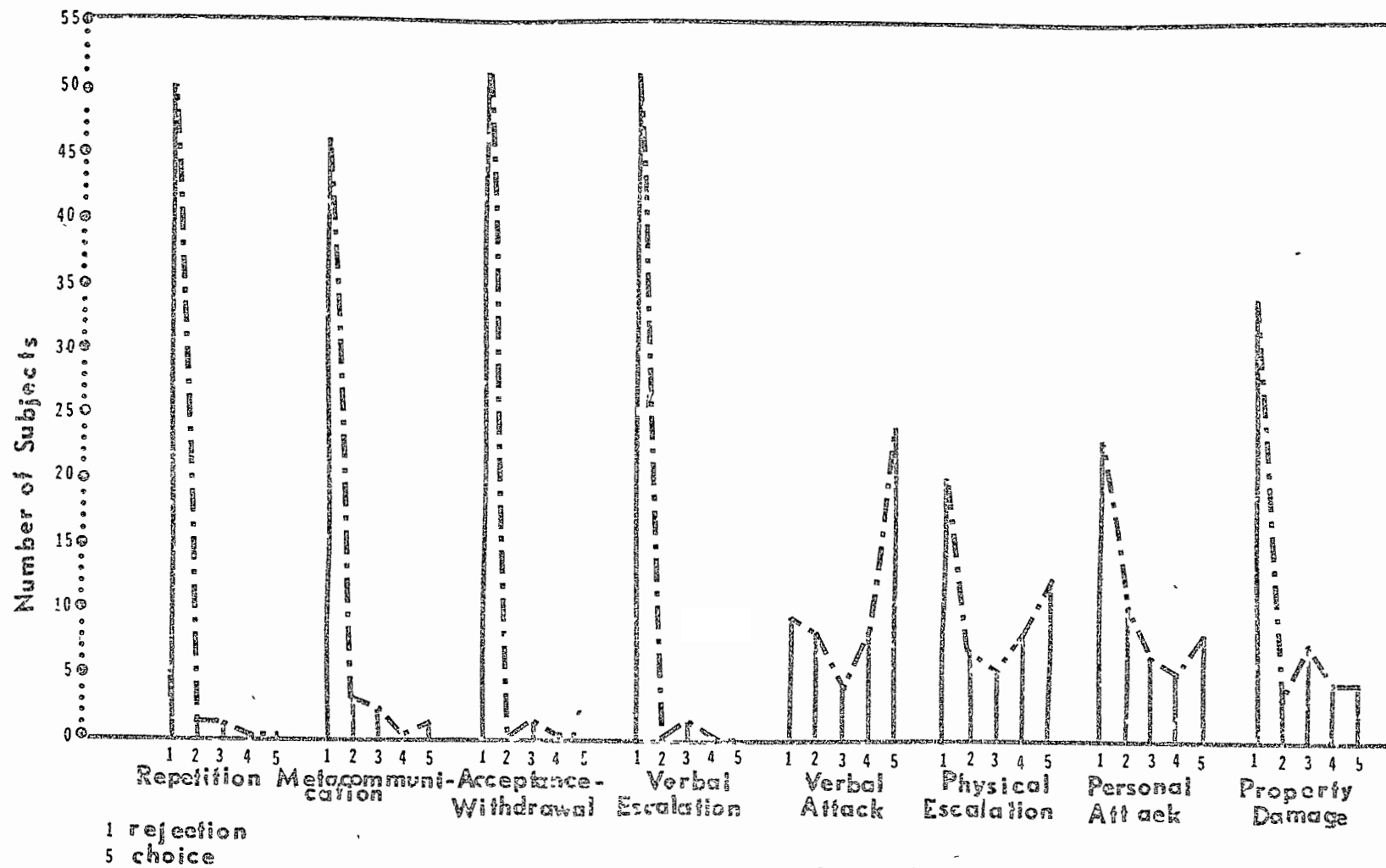


TABLE 18 (CONDITION VII)

HISTOGRAM DATA FOR CONDITION VII (IMPORTANT MESSAGE, UNIMPORTANT DENIER, PRIVATE CONTEXT)

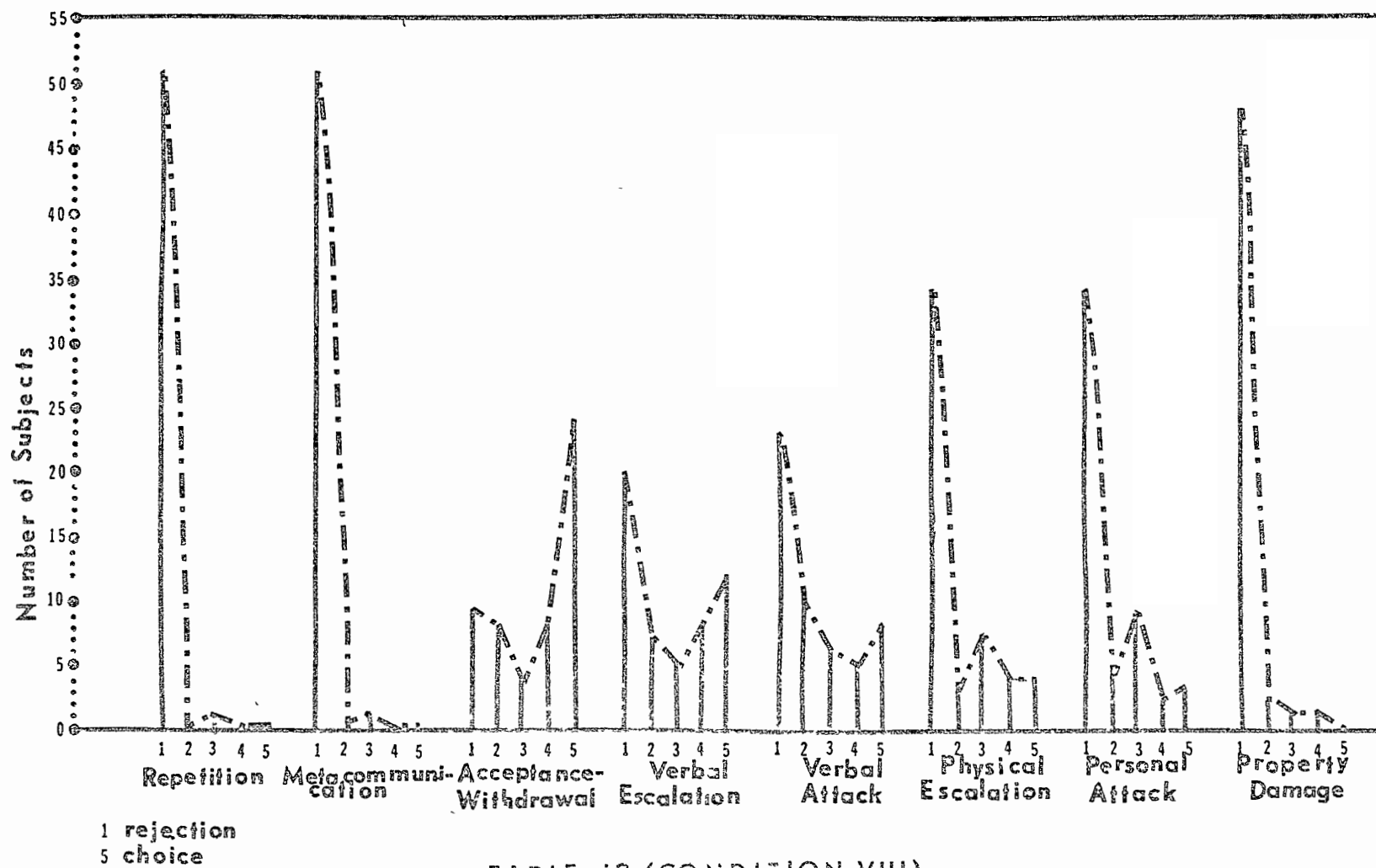


TABLE 19 (CONDITION VIII)

HISTOGRAM DATA FOR CONDITION VIII (UNIMPORTANT MESSAGE, IMPORTANT DENIER, PRIVATE CONTEXT)\*

## II. Correlation Results

Correlation of dependent variables (the eight responses) was also used to analyze response data. Treatment conditions were not considered; correlations represent relationships across all eight "treatments," or situations of communication denial, with respect to relationships between dependent, rather than independent, variables.

Means and correlations of the eight dependent variables appear in Table 20. Correlations above .15 or below -.15 were chosen as values indicating significant relationships.

Repetition and metacommunication appear to be highly positively correlated (.4995). Repetition and withdrawal are highly negatively correlated (-.5629). Repetition and verbal escalation show positive correlation which is not very high (.2766). Repetition and physical escalation show a low positive correlation (.1680).

Metacommunication and withdrawal show a high negative correlation (-.4291). Metacommunication and verbal escalation show a moderately positive correlation (.3035). Metacommunication, verbal attack, and physical escalation show low positive correlations (.1641, .1562).

Withdrawal appears not to be significantly correlated with other responses except for a moderately negative relationship with verbal escalation (-.2559). Verbal escalation shows a moderately positive correlation with verbal attack (.2837); physical escalation (.2747); and with personal attack (.2411). Verbal escalation also shows low positive correlations with personal attack (.2964) and property damage (.2551). Physical escalation shows a moderately positive correlation with the same responses (.3573, .3954). Personal attack shows a very

high positive correlation with property damage (.8774).

In summary, highly significant relationships were found between the responses of repetition and metacommunication, repetition and withdrawal, and withdrawal and metacommunication. An almost-perfect relationship was indicated between personal attack and property damage. Other relationships showed either no significant correlations or low correlations. It appears that repetition and metacommunication are viewed as similar types of responses by subjects, as well as repetition and withdrawal, and withdrawal and metacommunication. Further discussion of correlation results can be found in Chapter IV.

TABLE 20

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CORRELATION RESULTS	
MEANS	
Repetition	2.86
Metacommunication	2.30
Withdrawal	3.02
Verbal Escalation	1.48
Face-Saving Verbal Escalation	1.42
Physical Escalation	1.22
Personal Attack	1.05
Property Damage	1.05

---

TABLE 20 (Continued)

## CORRELATIONS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1.0000 *							
2	0.4995 *	1.0000 *						
3	-0.5630 *	-0.4291 *	1.0000 *					
4	0.2766 *	0.3035 *	-0.2559 *	1.0000 *				
5	-0.0128	0.1641 *	0.0073	0.2837 *	1.0000 *			
6	0.1680 *	0.1562 *	-0.1062	0.2747 *	0.1452	1.0000 *		
7	0.0544	0.0940	0.0180	0.2411 *	0.2964 *	0.3573 *	1.0000 *	
8	0.0723	0.1152	0.0122	0.1964 *	0.2551 *	0.3954 *	0.8774 *	1.0000 *

KEY: Repetition - 1  
 Metacommunication - 2  
 Withdrawal - 3  
 Verbal Escalation - 4  
 Face-saving Verbal Escalation - 5  
 Physical Escalation - 6  
 Personal Attack - 7  
 Property Damage - 8

\* - Significant correlation, above .15 or -.15

### III. Analysis of Variance Results.

Analysis of variance was used to test the influence of independent variables upon dependent variables. The program for analysis of variance employed, BMD08V, used a repeated measures technique with a fully crossed design. It tested both main effects and interaction effects of independent variables. Two dependent variables, personal attack and property damage, were excluded from the analysis of variance data because of the almost-perfect relationship between these two variables, and because when raw and standard scores were analyzed, invariably personal attack and property damage recieved total rejections for each denial situation by over ninety percent of subjects, in both cases.

A. Repetition. Analysis of variance for the first dependent variable, repetition, indicated no main effects and only one significant interaction effect which was produced by combination of the two independent variables of message and denier. Analysis of variance results are presented in Table 21, which indicates the effects of the independent variables upon the dependent variable of repetition. Means for the significant first-order interaction are presented in Figure I and II. The high F ratio indicates a highly significant influence on repetition as a response to the combination of independent variables identified in this study as importance of message and importance of denier.



TABLE 21

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR REPETITION

Source	df	MS	F
Total	1	3404.0865	
Between Subjects (R)	51	2.5424	
Within Subjects			
Message (A)	1	0.0385	0.0222
AxR	51	1.7296	
Denier (B)	1	1.3846	0.4711
BxR	51	2.9385	
Context (C)	1	2.4615	0.3721
CxR	51	6.6135	
AxB	1	13.1635	7.5782*
AxBxR	51	1.7370	
AxC	1	0.0096	0.0040
AxCxR	51	2.3969	
BxC	1	3.4712	1.5423
BxCxR	51	2.2506	
AxBxC	1	0.6154	0.4350
AxBxCxR	51	1.4144	

\*p &lt; .05

# FIGURE 1

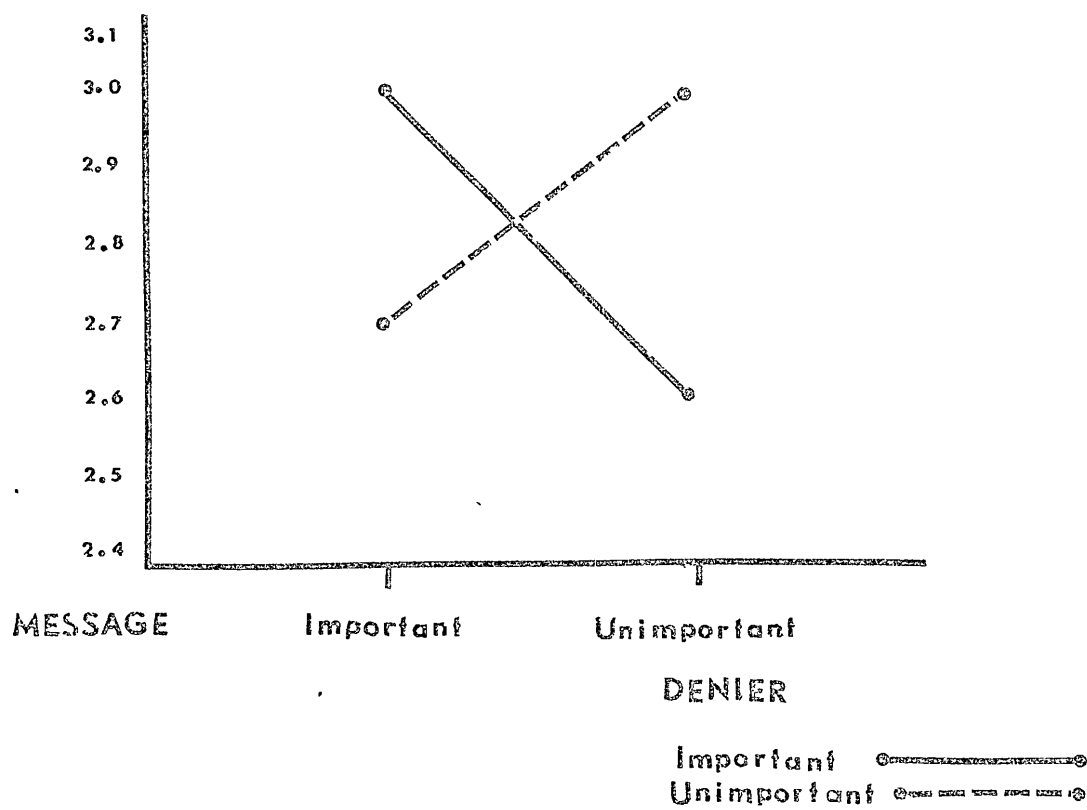
## MESSAGE

		Important	Unimportant
DENIER	Important	3.0 aA	2.6 bA
	Unimportant	2.7 aB	3.0 bB

FIRST-ORDER INTERACTION BETWEEN MESSAGE AND DENIER FOR REPETITION

## FIGURE II

FIRST-ORDER INTERACTION BETWEEN MESSAGE AND DENIER FOR REPETITION



Interaction Effect of Message and Denier Upon Repetition. The Neuman-Kuel's test for significance was used to determine if means were significantly different from each other. No significant differences appeared among the means for the first-order interaction; subjects tended to choose repetition as a response equally as often when levels of the two independent variables differed as when they were similar. Importance of message and denier seemed to have no effect upon choice of repetition as a response to combinations of these two variables. Repetition is chosen most often when both levels of message and denier are the same (either important or unimportant). When both message and denier are perceived as either important or unimportant, repetition is chosen at the same rate.

Means were equal when both levels of the two independent variables were the same (important message - important denier, or unimportant message - unimportant denier). Means were also approximately equal when levels of the two variables differed (important message - unimportant denier; unimportant message - important denier). Levels of the two independent variables have exactly reversed from each other, and cause a reversal of the pattern of effects. In summary, the actual levels (important or unimportant) of the independent variables of message and denier do not cause the interaction effect; rather, reversals of these levels cause the interaction effect, as well as the combination of message and denier, without regard to particular levels of importance.

B. Metacommunication. Analysis of variance data for the second dependent variable, metacommunication (asking about the denial), can be found in Table 22. The data indicated no main effects; however, a significant first-order interaction effect was indicated for the combination of the independent variables of message and denier. A significant second-order interaction effect was also indicated for the combination of the independent variables of message, denier, and context. Means for the significant first-order interaction effect are presented in Figures III and IV, and means for the significant second-order interaction effect are presented in Figures V and VI.

1. Interaction Effect of Message and Denier Upon Metacommunication.

The significant first-order interaction effect for metacommunication occurred between the independent variables of message and denier. A significant F ratio of 8.1368 was indicated.

The Neuman-Kuells test for significance was applied to test the means for significant differences; again, no means were significantly different from each other. A reversal of the pattern of effects also occurred. When both levels of the independent variables are the same, means are approximately equal (important message - important denier; unimportant message - unimportant denier). When levels of the independent variables are dissimilar, means are also approximately equal (important message - unimportant denier; unimportant message - important denier). The actual levels of the independent variables do not cause the interactive effect for metacommunication; rather, the combination of message and denier and the reversal of the pattern of effects cause the interaction effect for metacommunication.

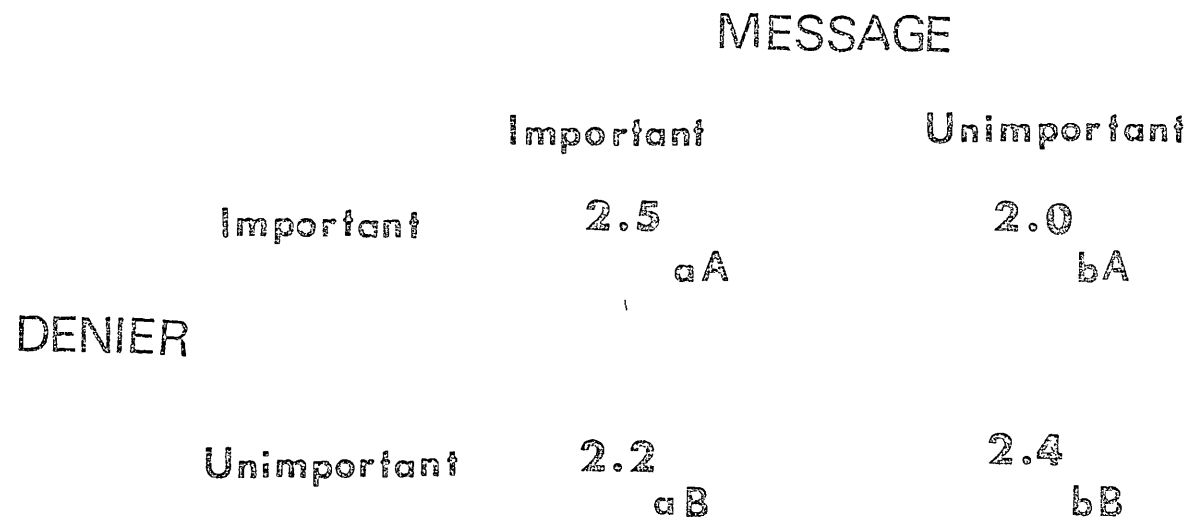
TABLE 22

## ANALYSIS FOR VARIANCE FOR METACOMMUNICATION

Source	df	MS	F
Total	1	2192.3678	
Between Subjects (R)	51	3.0639	
Within Subjects			
Message (A)	1	1.4299	1.4299
A x R	51	1.4138	
Denier (B)	1	0.1716	0.1716
B x R	51	2.4130	
Context (C)	1	0.5805	0.5805
C x R	51	3.4824	
A x B	1	15.7716	8.1368*
A x B x R	51	1.9383	
A x C	1	4.8678	2.2722
A x C x R	51	2.1423	
B x C	1	7.2716	3.8289
B x C x R	51	1.8991	
A x B x C	1	6.2524	4.5313*
A x B x C x R	51	1.3798	

\*p. &lt; .05

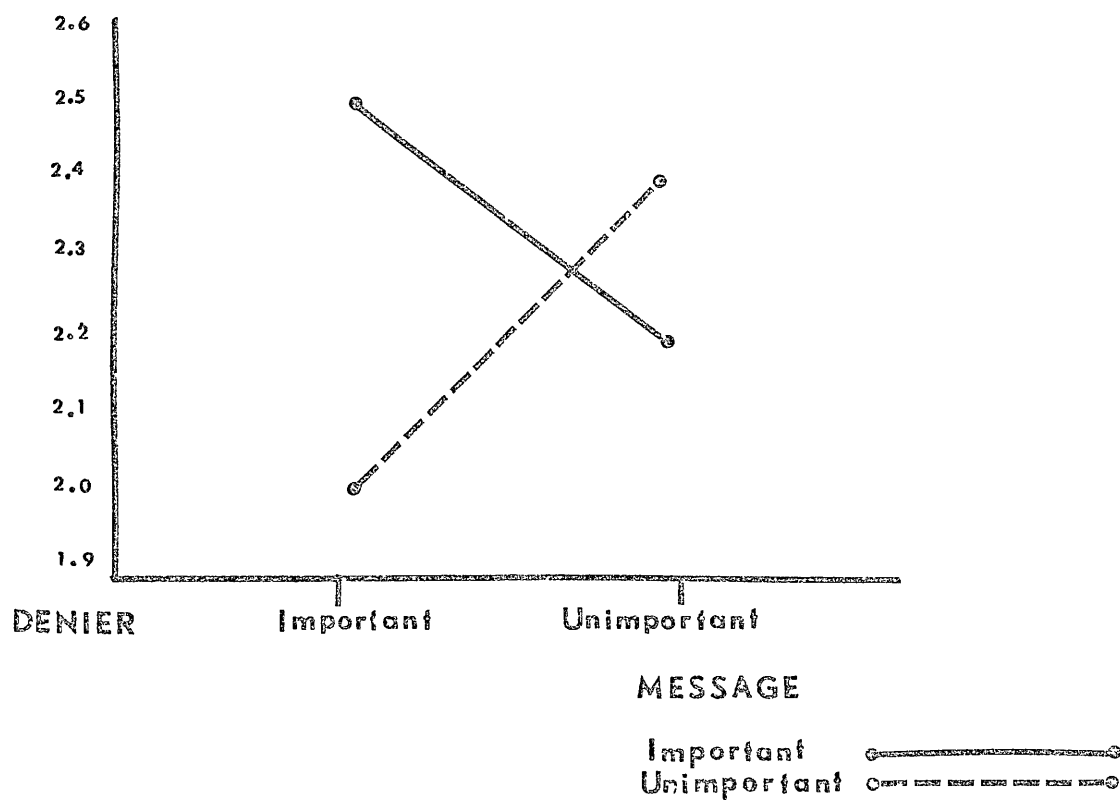
# FIGURE III



FIRST-ORDER INTERACTION BETWEEN MESSAGE AND DENIER FOR METACOMMUNICATION

## FIGURE IV

FIRST-ORDER INTERACTION BETWEEN MESSAGE AND DENIER FOR METACOMMUNICATION





2. Interaction Effects of Message, Denier, and Context Upon Metacommunication. The significant second-order interaction occurred among all three independent variables--message, denier, and context. The F ratio of 4.5313 indicated that the message and denier variables most likely contribute heavily to the second-order interaction effects; the F ratio for the first-order interaction effect between message and denier was very high (8.1368).

The Neuman-Kuells test for significance was applied to means for the significant second-order interaction effect to determine what combinations of levels of variables caused the interaction effect. Only two combinations were found to have significantly different means; thus, these two combinations probably cause the interaction effect.

The condition of unimportant message and denier and public context received the highest mean value for metacommunication (2.9). This condition's mean, however, differed significantly from the condition including an unimportant message and denier and private context. It appears that metacommunication is chosen most often when the context is public, and least often when the context is private (all mean values for conditions including a public context are higher than those including a private context). The level of context is what makes these two conditions differ significantly from each other: in both conditions, both message and denier are perceived as unimportant, but in one condition the context is public and in the other it is private. Means for conditions including a private context did not differ significantly from each other, but means including public contexts did.

# FIGURE V

## MESSAGE

Important

Unimportant

DENIER

DENIER

Important

Unimportant

Important

Unimportant

Public 2.6  
ABa

2.2  
Ab

2.1  
Ac

2.2  
B

CONTEXT

Private 2.5  
Ca

2.2  
Cb

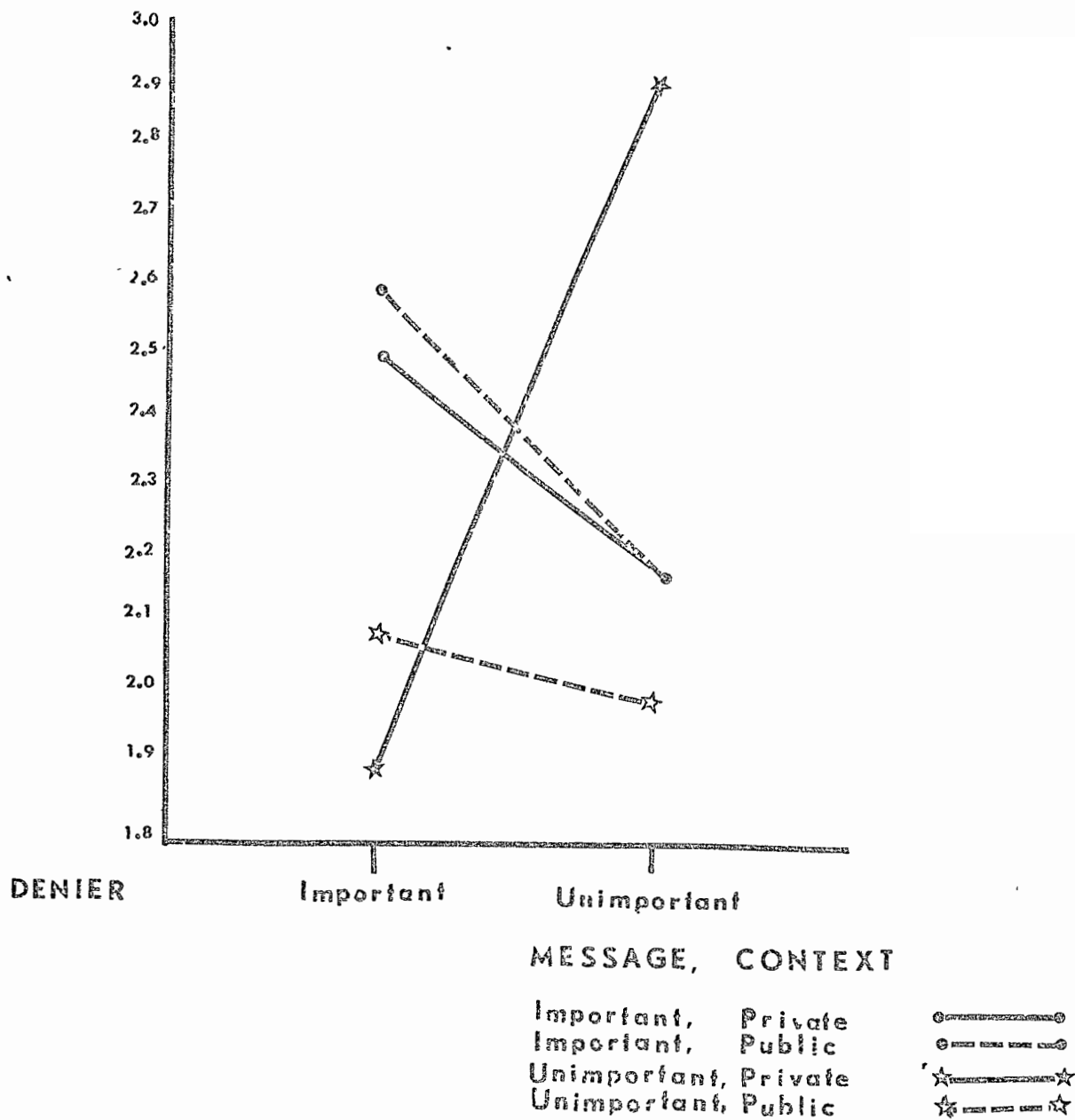
1.9  
Cc

2.0  
C

SECOND-ORDER INTERACTION AMONG MESSAGE, DENIER, AND CONTEXT FOR METACOMMUNICATION

# FIGURE VI

SECOND-ORDER INTERACTION AMONG MESSAGE, DENIER, AND CONTEXT FOR METACOMMUNICATION



The condition including an unimportant message and denier and a public context also differed significantly from two other conditions:

- (1) unimportant message, important denier, public context (2.1);
- (2) important message, unimportant denier, public context (2.2).

These latter two conditions' means did not differ significantly from each other. A reversal effect occurs in these latter two conditions: when the levels of message and denier are dissimilar within a condition, and each level is reversed, with levels remaining dissimilar within the second condition, and the contextual level remains constant, means are approximately equal (2.1 and 2.2). The independent variables of message and denier appear to make the difference here, and further, they make the difference only if levels are dissimilar within conditions.

The condition including an unimportant message, an important denier, and a private context, also differed significantly from two other conditions: (1) important message and denier, public context; (2) unimportant message and denier, public context. These latter two conditions' means, again, do not differ significantly from each other; mean values are respectively 2.6 and 2.9. A reversal of the message and denier variables occurs once more; when both levels of message and denier are the same (but reverse in the second condition), and the contextual variable level remains constant, mean values are approximately equal. The condition including an unimportant message, an important denier, and a private context differs from the latter two conditions because levels are dissimilar and context is private.

The largest difference in means is found between two conditions:

- (1) unimportant message and denier, public context (2.9); and
- (2) unimportant message and denier, private context (2.0). Here the independent variable of context is what makes the difference, since levels of message and denier variables are the same in each condition.

The public context is what mainly makes the difference in the second-order interaction effect for metacommunication, in addition to similarity of levels and reversals. It appears that interactive effects are caused by particular combinations of particular levels of the independent variables, rather than the interactive effects being caused by only one variable. Combinations of situational variables are the key to understanding this second-order interaction effect.

C. Acceptance-Withdrawal. Table 23 presents the analysis of variance data for the dependent variable of acceptance-withdrawal. A significant first-order interaction effect was indicated for the combination of message and contextual independent variables. Means for this first-order interaction effect are presented in Figures VII and VIII. A significant second-order interaction effect was also indicated for the independent variables of message, denier, and context. Means for this interaction effect may be found in Figures IX and X.

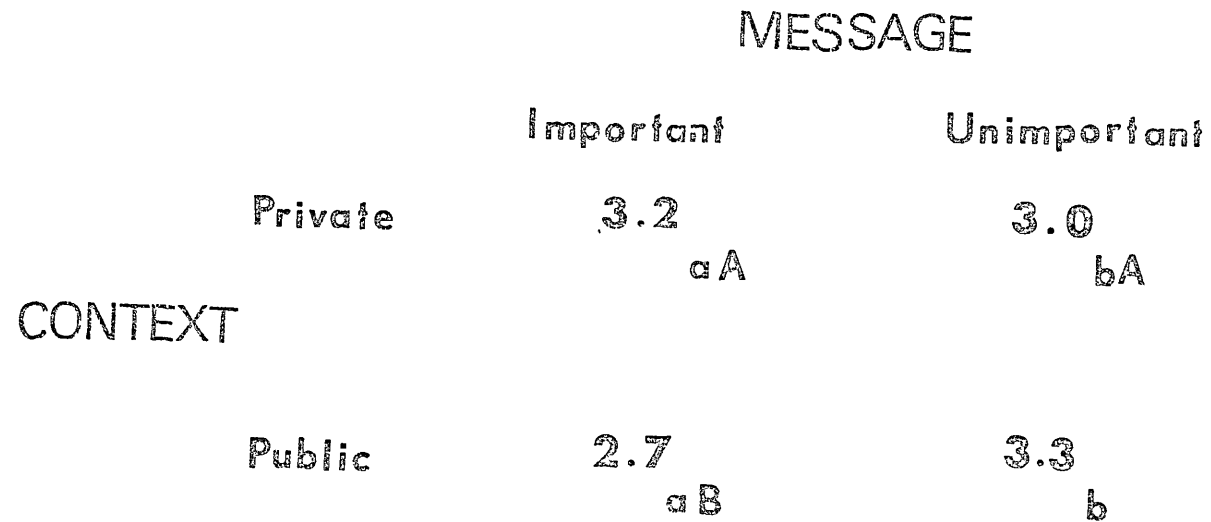
TABLE 23

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR WITHDRAWAL

Source	df	MS	F
Total	1	3810.2909	
Between Subjects (R)	51	2.2173	
Within Subjects			
Message (A)	1	2.9447	1.9395
A x R	51	1.5182	
Denier (B)	1	9.5409	3.2693
B x R	51	2.9183	
Context (C)	1	1.0601	0.2685
C x R	51	3.9473	
A x B	1	5.7716	3.6517
A x B x R	51	1.5805	
A x C	1	16.5601	6.4072*
A x C x R	51	2.5846	
B x C	1	3.2909	1.4711
B x C x R	51	2.2369	
A x B x C	1	24.5216	9.9370*
A x B x C x R	51	2.4677	

\*p. &lt; .05

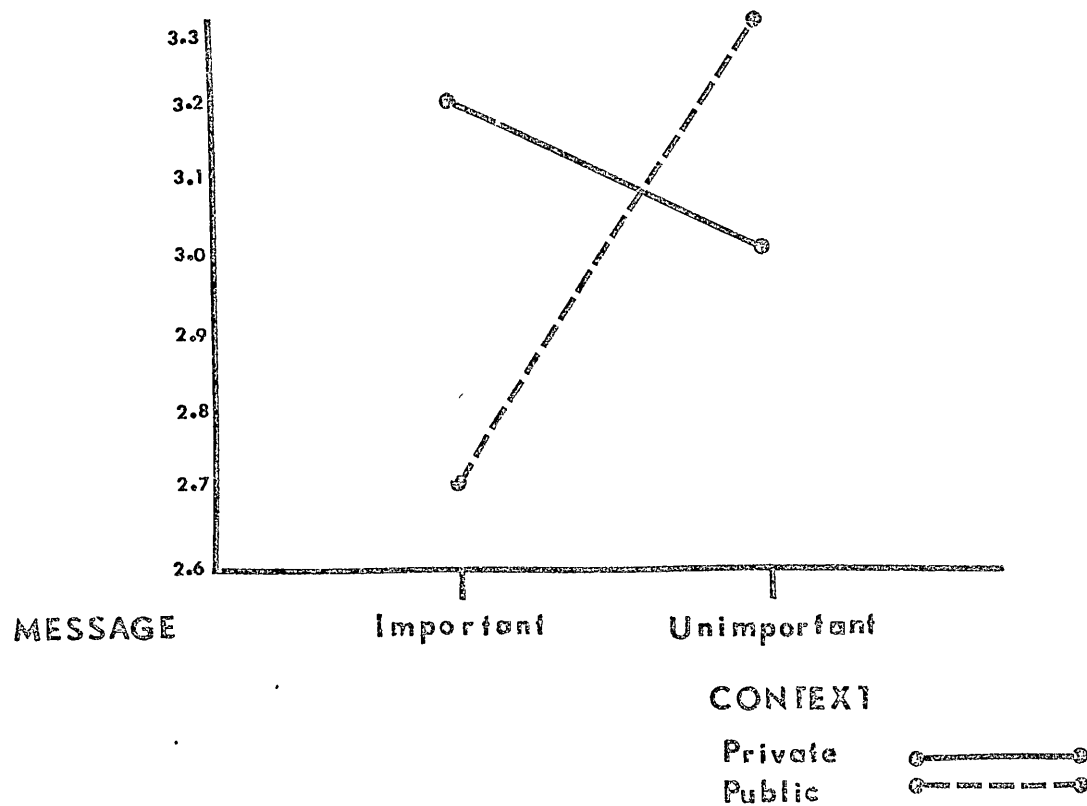
## FIGURE VII



FIRST-ORDER INTERACTION BETWEEN MESSAGE AND CONTEXT FOR  
ACCEPTANCE-WITHDRAWAL

## FIGURE VIII

FIRST-ORDER INTERACTION BETWEEN MESSAGE AND CONTEXT FOR  
ACCEPTANCE-WITHDRAWAL





1. Interaction Effects of Message and Context Upon Acceptance-Withdrawal. When the Neuman-Kuells test for significance was applied to the means for the first-order interaction effect between message and context, only one mean appeared to be significantly different from other means. Acceptance-withdrawal is chosen most often when the message is unimportant and the context is public (3.3). This mean value differs significantly from the mean for an important message and public context (2.7). Importance of message causes the significant difference (contextual level remains constant across the two conditions). The highest mean was for the condition including an unimportant message and a public context; the lowest mean was for the condition including an important message and a public context. In the private contexts means do not differ significantly (3.2 and 3.0). / Thus, importance of message is only significant in a public context. Reversal of the pattern of effects also occurs in this interaction effect; when the message is important and the context is private, the mean is 3.2, and when the message is unimportant and the context is public the mean is 3.3. When the message is important and the context is private, the mean value is 3.2, and when the message is unimportant and the context is public, the mean value is 3.0.

Importance of the message in public contexts and reversals of the pattern of effects are key factors in influencing the first-order interaction effect for acceptance-withdrawal.

2. Interaction Effects of Message, Denier, and Context Upon Acceptance-Withdrawal. The F ratio for this interaction effect was very high; 9.9370. The first-order interaction effect of message and context probably contribute heavily to this high level of significance.

Only one mean appeared to be significantly different from others when the Neuman-Kuells test for significance was applied to means; this was the mean for the condition including an unimportant message and denier and a private context. This mean differed significantly from two other means; those for the conditions including (1) unimportant message, important denier, and private context; and (2) important message, unimportant denier, and private context. (Means for these latter two conditions are not significantly different from each other, because levels of message and denier within each condition are dissimilar and because these levels exactly reverse in the two conditions; the contextual variable remains constant).

The mean for the first condition (unimportant message, important denier, private context) differs because of the levels of the denier variable (message and contextual variables are the same in both conditions). The mean for the second condition (important message, unimportant denier, private context) differs because of the message variable (denier and contextual variables are the same in both conditions). However, the level of the contextual variable (private context) remains constant in all three conditions. Means are higher in public contexts than in private contexts, with the one exception of the significantly different mean.

Two conditions have equal means: those including (1) important

# FIGURE IX

## MESSAGE

Important

Unimportant

DENIER

DENIER

Important

Unimportant

Important

Unimportant

Public 3.3<sub>Aa</sub>

3.1<sub>Ab</sub>

3.3<sub>Ad</sub>

3.0<sub>Ac</sub>

CONTEXT

Private 3.1<sub>BCa</sub>

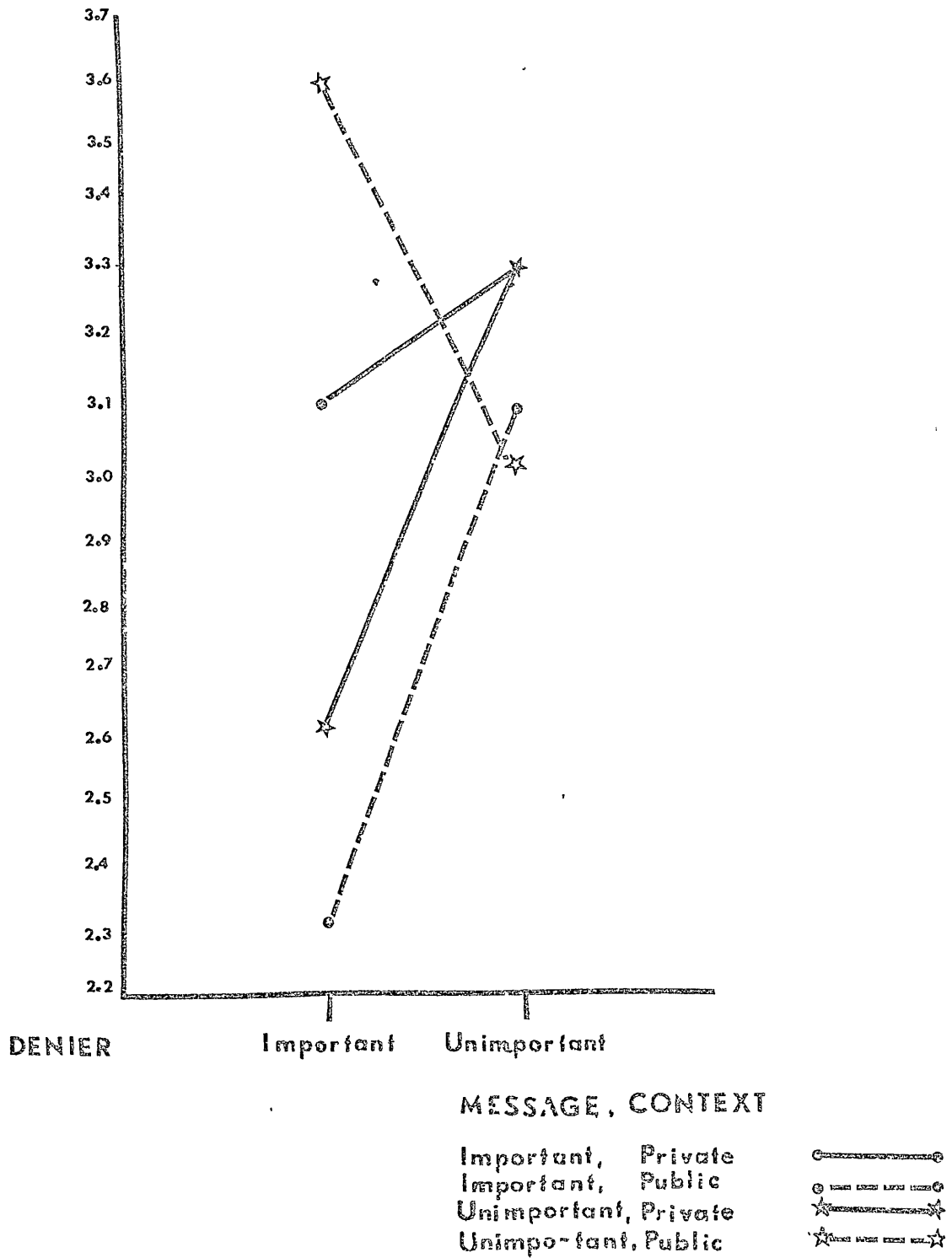
2.3<sub>Bb</sub>

2.6<sub>Bd</sub>

3.6<sub>Cc</sub>

SECOND-ORDER INTERACTION AMONG MESSAGE, DENIER, AND CONTEXT FOR ACCEPTANCE-WITHDRAWAL

FIGURE X



SECOND-ORDER INTERACTION AMONG MESSAGE, DENIER, AND CONTEXT FOR  
ACCEPTANCE-WITHDRAWAL

message and denier, public context (3.3); and (2) unimportant message, important denier, public context (3.3). Message levels are the only levels of variables which differ in these two conditions; however, since means are equal, this difference is not influential.

Dissimilar levels of variables within conditions and reversals of the pattern of effects, as well as the public contextual variable, seem to influence the second-order interaction effect. However, all three independent variables and various levels also seem to combine in particular ways to create the interaction effect. The effect cannot be attributed to only one variable.

D. Verbal Escalation. The analysis of variance data for verbal escalation is reported in Table 24. One main effect, for the denier variable, was indicated. All means including an important denier were higher than in those conditions which included an unimportant denier. Thus, verbal escalation was chosen as a result of the important level of the independent variable of denier.

E. Other Responses. No main effects nor significant interactions were indicated for verbal attack or for physical escalation. Analysis of variance data for these responses may be found in Tables 25 and 26. These results indicate that nothing affected or caused choice of these responses, or, at least, none of the three independent variables.

TABLE 24

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR VERBAL ESCALATION

Source	df	MS	F
Total	1	912.1538	
Between Subjects (R)	51	1.0411	
Within Subjects			
Message (A)	1	0.0385	0.0454
AxR	51	0.8473	
Denier (B)	1	4.6538	6.3128*
BxR	51	0.7372	
Context (C)	1	0.9615	0.5682
CxR	51	1.6919	
AxB	1	1.3846	1.2417
AxBxR	51	1.1150	
AxC	1	1.8846	2.1187
AxCxR	51	0.8895	
BxC	1	0.1538	0.2606
BxCxR	51	0.5901	
AxBxC	1	2.4615	2.0997
AxBxCxR	51	1.1723	

\*p. &lt; .05

TABLE 25

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR VERBAL ATTACK

Source	df	MS	F
Total	1	833.9447	
Between Subjects (R)	51	0.9006	
Within Subjects			
Message (A)	1	0.4062	0.4410
AxR	51	0.9210	
Denier (B)	1	0.0601	0.1101
BxR	51	0.5454	
Context (C)	1	1.2716	1.1662
CxR	51	1.0903	
AxB	1	0.5409	0.6440
AxBxR	51	0.8399	
AxC	1	0.0024	0.0021
AxCxR	51	1.1250	
BxC	1	0.4062	0.6583
BxCxR	51	0.6170	
AxBxC	1	0.1917	0.2744
AxBxCxR	51	0.7094	

\*p &lt; .05

TABLE 26

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR PHYSICAL ESCALATION

Source	df	MS	F
Total	1	622.7909	
Between Subjects (R)	51	0.5507	
Within Subjects			
Message (A)	1	2.3101	2.6144
AxR	51	0.8836	
Denier (B)	1	0.0024	0.0055
BxR	51	0.4289	
Context (C)	1	0.5409	0.9566
CxR	51	0.5654	
AxB	1	1.0601	3.7891
AxBxR	51	0.3983	
AxC	1	0.8678	1.6385
AxGxR	51	0.5296	
BxC	1	0.1178	0.2583
BxCxR	51	0.4560	
AxBxC	1	0.0216	0.0482
AxBxCxR	51	0.4481	

\*p &lt; .05



E. Summary of Analysis of Variance Results. Analysis of variance results for repetition indicated a first-order interaction effect produced by the combination of message and denier. No means were significantly different. Reversals of the levels of the independent variables caused the similar effects.

A significant first-order interaction was indicated for metacommunication for the combination of message and denier. Again, no means were significantly different, and again, reversals of similar levels of the independent variables caused the like effects. A significant second-order interaction effect was also indicated for metacommunication for message, denier, and context. Two means were found to be significantly different. Means for private contexts did not differ significantly; public context means did. Reversals of the pattern of effects plus dissimilarity of levels of independent variables, as well as the public level of the contextual variable, account for significant differences.

Data indicated a significant first-order interaction effect for acceptance-withdrawal for message and context. One mean was significantly different from others; data indicated that importance of message is significant only in public contexts. Reversals of the pattern of effects created like effects in other means. A significant second-order interaction effect was also indicated for message, denier, and context. One mean appeared significantly different, due to reversals of the patterns of effect for the independent variables of message and denier. Means were highest in public contexts. All three independent variables interact to produce the interaction effect.

A main effect for the denier variable was indicated for verbal escalation. Means including an important denier were higher than means including an unimportant denier; thus, importance of denier is the key to this main effect.

No main effects nor interactions were indicated for verbal attack or for physical escalation.

Reasons for particular effects will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

#### IV. Summary of Results.

Repetition of Initial Communication. Subjects chose repetition of initial communication as the most appropriate response for two situations of communication denial; both situations included an unimportant denier. A significant first-order interaction effect for the independent variables of message and denier was indicated in analysis of variance results. A reversal of the pattern of effects occurred when both levels of message and denier were the same (important message - important denier; unimportant message - unimportant denier); means were also equal when levels of the denier variable were reversed (important message - unimportant denier; unimportant message - important denier). In summary, importance of the message appears to be the influential factor in choice of repetition as a response to communication denial.

Metacommunication. Metacommunication (asking directly about the denial) was not commonly chosen as an appropriate response to any situations of communication denial. However, both first- and second-order interaction effects were indicated in analysis of variance results. A reversal of the pattern of effects occurred in the first-order interaction effect between the independent variables of message and denier. When both levels of the independent variables are the same, means are approximately equal (important message - important denier; unimportant message - unimportant denier). When levels of the denier variable are reversed, but message levels remain constant, means are also approximately

equal (important message - unimportant denier; unimportant message - important denier). In summary, levels of the independent variable of message are what make the difference in choice of metacommunication as a response to communication denial.

Acceptance-Withdrawal. Acceptance-withdrawal (accepting the implication of the denial) was chosen as the most appropriate response for three situations of communication denial. Two situations both included an important denier and a private context. Levels of variables in these two situations are the exact reverse of each other (important message and denier, private context - unimportant message and denier, public context). A significant first-order interaction effect appeared in analysis of variance results between the independent variables of message and context. One mean was found to be significantly different from others; when the message is unimportant and the context is public. This mean is similar to that for the reversal effect mentioned for this response. This mean differed significantly from that of important message and public context; thus, the level of important for the message variable creates the first-order interaction effect for this response. A reversal of the pattern of effects also occurs; means are approximately equal when the message is important, the context private, and when the message is unimportant and the context is public. An unimportant message and a public context are the influential factors in this first-order interaction effect.

A second-order interaction effect was also indicated for acceptance-withdrawal, among message, denier, and context. One mean was significantly different from two others. In one case means differed because the levels

of the denier variable differed (levels of message and context remained constant). The contextual variable remained constant for all three means; however, means were higher in public contexts than in private contexts. It appears that although message and denier variables are influential in the second-order interaction effect, that the contextual variable also plays a large part, and that particular combinations of the particular levels of all three independent variables are what create interaction effects for this response.

Verbal Escalation. Verbal escalation was not chosen as an appropriate response to situations of communication denial. However, although analysis of variance results indicated that this response was most generally rejected for denial situations, analysis of variance results indicated a main effect for the denier variable for this response. All means including an important denier were higher than those including an unimportant denier; thus, the level of important for the denier variable influences choice of this response.

Verbal Attack. Verbal attack was chosen as the most appropriate response to two situations of communication denial; according to histogram results. Levels of each independent variable were exactly reversed in these two situations (unimportant message - important denier - public context; important message - unimportant denier - private context). However, analysis of variance results indicated no main effects nor interaction effects for this response. There appears to be no logical explanation for these different results.

Physical Escalation. This response was not chosen as an appropriate response to any situations of communication denial. Analysis of variance results indicated no main nor interaction effects. The independent variables of message, denier, and context do not influence this response.

Personal Attack. Physical attack was chosen as the most appropriate response to two situations of communication denial. Levels of independent variables in each situation are the exact reverse of each other (unimportant message and denier, private context - important message and denier, public context). It was postulated earlier in this chapter that when situations are the exact reverse of each other with levels of message and denier remaining constant within each condition, that similar response effects occur. This postulation is supported by evidence for two other responses: acceptance-withdrawal, repetition, and also, metacommunication. There appears to be sufficient evidence to support this postulation as partial explanation of similar effects.

Personal attack and property damage were excluded from analysis of variance because when raw scores were analyzed, large numbers of subjects rejected these responses. An almost-perfect relationship was indicated for the two responses by correlation data. Why personal attack appeared to be chosen as an appropriate response in histogram analyses when overall raw scores indicated low choices rates, is not clear. Property damage was rejected almost unanimously for all situations of communication denial.

In summary, the null hypothesis (that differential treatment conditions do not create differential response effects) can be rejected for repetition, metacommunication, acceptance-withdrawal, verbal escalation, personal attack, and property damage. The null hypothesis must be accepted for the responses of verbal attack and physical escalation. Differential treatment conditions do create differential response effects in most cases.

## CHAPTER IV

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine which responses average college undergraduates considered to be appropriate to varying situations of communication denial. Please refer to Chapters II and III for a detailed discussion of methodology used in this study.

Eight different responses were presented for eight different communication denial situations. Subjects were asked to rate each response for each different situation with a one-to-five bi-polar scale; one indicated definite rejection of the response, and five indicated definite choice of the response. Each of the eight different communication denial situations included a different combination of levels of the three independent variables (message - important or unimportant; denier - important or unimportant; context - private or public). Thus, subjects were responding actually to eight different "treatment" conditions. Data analysis indicated that no direct causal relationships exist between any one variable and any one type of response. Rather, some relationships were indicated between certain types of responses and certain combinations of independent variables. The word "combination" is the key to this study. No one response was considered appropriate for all eight situations of communication denial.



An overall histogram depicting frequencies of responses without regard to specific situational variables indicated that acceptance-withdrawal and repetition of initial communication are the most commonly chosen responses for all situations of communication denial. Attention-getting verbal escalation, verbal attack, physical escalation, physical attack, and property damage were not chosen as appropriate responses for most situations of communication denial. However, when individual histograms were analyzed for responses to each of the eight different situations of communication denial (these histograms did concern specific situational variables), quite different results were indicated. Following is a discussion of results for responses for each situation of communication denial. Real-life examples (which were included in the Communication Denial Response Inventory) are included to aid the reader in visualizing situational variables and levels for each of the eight different communication denial situations.

#### I. Discussion of Results for Each Situation of Communication Denial

##### I. Condition I (Message - Important; Denier - Important; Context - Private).

Example: You approach your professor after class and ask him if you could speak to him about your current grades in the class. You want to improve your grade, so this question and his answer are important to you. He looks at you, scowls, and tells you he doesn't have time. He walks away in a hurry. What would you do?

When the message and denier are important, and the context is private, subjects seem to be torn between choice or rejection of acceptance-withdrawal as an appropriate response to this denial situation. However, more subjects chose acceptance-withdrawal than rejected this response, and acceptance-withdrawal was chosen by more subjects than any other response. Thus, when situational variables of important message and denier and private context are combined, acceptance-withdrawal is the response considered most appropriate for this combination of independent variables.

There are several reasons which could explain why subjects chose this response as most appropriate for this denial situation. In this situation, the professor (the important denier) is likely to be perceived as a significant other by the student in the example. The professor may also be perceived as the "superior" of the "subordinate" student; the student depends upon the professor for a desired reward, or ego-enhancer (the semester grade). Giffin and Watzlawick have both discussed the near-impossibility of initiating direct communication about denial when the victim of denial is in the weaker, one-down position (please see Chapter I for a detailed discussion). Thus, it is not surprising that subjects reject responses which would require direct communication about the denial (repetition and metacommunication). Subjects specifically rejected attention-getting verbal escalation, verbal attack, physical escalation, physical attack, and property damage as well. Rejection of these responses comes as no surprise for this situation, either. Because semester grades are a subjective matter, the student would probably feel that he should maintain a respectful

relationship with his professor. Physical or verbal "attack" responses would be too threatening to maintenance of such a relationship in this situation. Because of the importance of message and denier in this situation, acceptance-withdrawal appears to be the only response that is generally considered as appropriate. A possible explanation for the rejection of this same response by a large number of subjects may be that because the information desired is very important, subjects may consider the professor's answer too important to withdraw from the situation, thus receiving no answer. However, subjects appear to be in a real quandary concerning choice of an appropriate response if acceptance-withdrawal is rejected.

II. Condition II (Message - Unimportant; Denier - Unimportant; Context - Private).

Example: You see a familiar face in a restaurant. You had planned to eat alone, but you go over to his booth to eat. You sit down and say hello although you are not sure that this person remembers you. Neither the message nor person are particularly important to you; you just wanted some company. When you say hello, this person ignores you. What would you do?

When the message and denier are unimportant, and the context is private, most subjects choose either to repeat initial communication or to physically attack the denier.

Repetition of initial communication invariably leaves the victim of denial open to still another denial. This threat inherent in this response does not seem to make much difference in this denial situation, possibly because neither message nor denier are particularly important to the victim. However, more subjects chose to physically attack the

denier than to repeat the initial "Hello." Perhaps the fact that both message and denier are unimportant to the victim contributes to choice of physical attack. The old maxim that the trivial things in life are more infuriating than the more important things may apply to this denial situation and choice of physical attack. These appear to be the only logical explanations for choice of these responses for this situation of communication denial.

III. Condition III (Message - Unimportant; Denier - Important; Context - Public).

Example: You are in a new class and this is your first meeting. You know only one person and you yell "Hello" across the room. The message is not important to you but your acquaintance is. He acts like he doesn't know who you are; while this is happening the whole group is watching. What would you do?

When the message is unimportant, the denier important, and the context public, subjects chose verbal attack as the most appropriate response to this combination of situational variables. All other responses were ordinarily rejected; however, a high percentage of subjects chose physical attack, but more subjects rejected this response than chose it. Verbal attack includes "getting even" by personal insults, sarcasm, or name-calling. Perhaps when the denier is perceived as an important person, even if the victim's initial message was unimportant, the denier's answer becomes important because the denier himself is important to the victim. Thus, a simple "Hello-Goodbye" interchange should be viewed as an important message and response by a victim of denial, if the victim perceives

the denier as important. The public context of this denial situation probably also contributes to choice of verbal attack as an appropriate response. Most students are generally somewhat nervous at a first class meeting; they are aware that first impressions are lasting. Many students try to make a "good impression" the first day of class; thus, due to the evaluative climate of the first class meeting, a defensive communicative environment is produced. Elements of threat connected with the defensive environment contribute to defensive communication.

Repetition and metacommunication are too threatening as responses for this situation. Another denial could easily follow use of either of these two responses. The communicative climate is simply too defensive for the victim to chance a second denial. Acceptance-withdrawal is not viewed as a wise choice by subjects, probably because the victim in this situation would not be able to accept the implication of denial (that he is "worthless" as a communicator on that topic at that time with that person) because of the group context and because of the evaluative communicative climate of the group. Attention-getting, verbal escalation, physical escalation, physical attack, and property damage are also rejected as appropriate responses by subjects. These responses would probably be viewed as too "irrational" by the group of students in this situation. Thus, verbal attack is the least threatening response for the victim in this situation. With verbal attack, the victim can show the group that he handles an embarrassing situation well. He can also "put the denier in his place"

by embarrassing him in turn. If the victim embarrasses the denier, the denier is less likely to respond to the victim with another denial.

IV. -Condition IV (Message - Unimportant; Denier - Unimportant; Context - Public).

Example: You see a group of people in a car and you wave and honk at them. These people are not especially important to you, and your message is not really important either, but they ignore you although you know they saw you wave and honk. What would you do?

When the message and denier are unimportant and the context is public, subjects choose acceptance-withdrawal as the most appropriate response. All other responses were rejected; however, attention-getting verbal escalation did receive a number of high choice ratings, although more subjects rejected it than chose it. Possibly no threat exists in this denial situation, due to the unimportance of message and denier; there seems to be no stigma involved in accepting the implication of denial in this situation. In this type of situation, a victim of denial might logically choose to raise his voice, wave his arms, or use other means of attention-getting verbal escalation for the purpose of getting the denier's attention. Perhaps acceptance-withdrawal is chosen because the victim feels that the situation is just not important enough to devote any time and energy to. It appears that subjects withdraw from communication denial situations when these situations are either extremely threatening or extremely unimportant.

V. Condition V (Message - Important; Denier - Unimportant; Context - Public).

Example: You are eating with a group of friends in your dorm cafeteria. The food is terrible, and you ask a girl working behind the counter if something couldn't be done about the food. Your message is important, but the girl is not particularly important to you. She tells you to talk to the manager if you don't like the food. Your friends are watching this exchange. What would you do?

When the message is important, the denier unimportant, and the context public, subjects choose repetition of initial communication as the most appropriate response to this combination of situational variables. Acceptance-withdrawal also received a high choice rating although it was rejected by more subjects than chosen. This denial situation appears to pose no threat to the victim of denial; subjects will chance a repetition of the denial in this situation by repeating the initial communication. Perhaps because conceivably other channels exist for communication about the problem (the manager, etc.), the victim is not severely threatened by chancing another denial. In this situation the public context poses little threat of a reduced self-image or self-concept; perhaps in this situation subjects feel that the group of friends support the victim when the victim voices feelings about the food. This situation is not a communicative environment that ordinarily produces defensive behavior. Also, neither acceptance-withdrawal nor repetition seem to produce negative connotations to the subjects. Situational variables in this situation do not appear to combine to produce feelings of fear, threat, or evaluation for the victim of denial; perhaps the force of the denial

is not as strong in this situation as in others.

VI. Condition VI (Message - Important; Denier - Important; Context - Public).

Example: The chancellor at your university has called an all-student convocation to discuss a strike over Vietnam and how the strike will affect finals. The actual question is if the university will close or not on account of the strike. He tells you (the student body) that he will allow no strike and that classes will proceed as usual, and he leaves the convocation, allowing no questioning. This question and answer are quite important to you, as well as the supposed discussion about student wishes. Since the chancellor will ultimately control the final decision, he is also important to you. What would you do?

When the message and denier are important, and the context is public, subjects choose physical attack as the most appropriate response to this denial situation. All other responses were rejected; however, repetition of initial communication was rejected by only eight more subjects than chosen.

One problem with the Communication Denial Response Inventory is that results do not indicate which responses would be attempted first by victims of denial to obtain a normal communicative response after denial has occurred. It may be postulated that subjects would first attempt to repeat initial communication and then move to more violent responses (such as physical attack) if denial is repeated. America has seen a recent upsurge of frequencies of violent responses to situations of this type, including campus confrontations, civil rights confrontations, and responses to the Vietnam War. Perhaps the key is that when normal communicative channels are exhausted, and



denial still occurs, more violent responses such as physical attack, physical escalation, and property damage are the only responses which gain attention or recognition, rather than repeated denials. Victims of large-scale denials (nations, minority groups, students, women) may be proving the validity of Bion's "fight-flight" syndrome, by choosing violent responses to denial in order to get a normal response (agreement or disagreement) from the denier. It will be only a matter of time before we see if these groups using these more violent responses will move to the "flight" stage of the syndrome, or withdrawal. Implications of choice of physical attack as the most appropriate response to this situation are far-reaching, and will be discussed in more length later in this chapter.

VII. Condition VII (Message - Important; Denier - Unimportant; Context - Private).

Example: You are in the City Hall trying to find out where to pay your license tag fee. You go into the Treasurer's office and ask the secretary where to go. She tells you to find someone else and ask them; she is busy. Although the secretary is not important to you, your message is because you need this information quickly. What would you do?

When the message is important, the denier unimportant, and the context private, subjects choose verbal attack as the most appropriate response. However, physical responses (physical escalation, physical attack, and property damage) received higher choice ratings than in prior situations of communication denial, although these responses were rejected for this denial situation. It appears that in this situation, when the initial communication is denied, the victim's dominant

response is to "get even" or to "put the secretary in her place." Perhaps the secretary's response is perceived by the victim as an attack to the victim's importance, and thus his self-image. He considers himself somewhat important and expects the secretary to do the same. When he does not receive a courteous response, he reduces the secretary's importance, to both himself and to her, in order to retain his image of himself. Other responses also risk the threat of additional denials. Subjects tend to view verbal attack as the best way to deal with the denial in this situation.

VIII. Condition VIII (Message - Unimportant; Denier - Important; Context - Private).

Example: You just started a new job and you are anxious to please your boss; what he thinks of you is important to you. You deliver a message to him that he is to call Mrs. Jones. The message is not important to you but your boss is. He ignores you completely and leafs through some papers without acknowledging your presence. What would you do?

When the message is unimportant, the denier important, and the context private, subjects chose acceptance-withdrawal as the most appropriate response. All other responses were rejected, but, as in Condition VII, more subjects chose physical responses than in other conditions.

A defensive communicative climate has been set up with the boss-employee relationship in this situation. The boss is the superior, and the employee the subordinate. The boss also has the power to "hire and fire" his employees. Threat of an additional denial coupled with the defensive communicative climate makes choice of

repetition or metacommunication unlikely in this denial situation. Although acceptance-withdrawal means accepting the implication of denial, i.e., that the victim is unworthy of communication at that time on that topic with that person, it does not seem to threaten the victim's self-image or create other problems. Importance of the denier may be the key for choice of this response; subjects may feel that acceptance of the implication of denial is a small price to pay for maintenance of a good boss-employee relationship. It appears that subjects choose acceptance-withdrawal as a response when denial situations are either extremely important or extremely unimportant.

Summary of Results for Each Situation of Communication Denial. It seems relevant to compare which responses subjects indicated were most appropriate for different situations of communication denial. In most cases, at least one type of response was chosen for two or more different denial situations. Some interesting parallels are revealed with a comparison of this sort.

Physical attack was chosen as the most appropriate response to two different combinations of situational variables, or denial conditions: (1) unimportant message and denier, private context; and (2) important message and denier, public context (Conditions II and VI). Real-life examples for these two situations were drastically different. There appears to be no explanation for choice of physical attack as the most appropriate response to both situations, except that in both cases, levels of importance of message and denier are the same within each condition. A reversal of the pattern of effects may be

another reason for choice of physical attack for both situations; Condition VI is the exact reverse of Condition II except that levels of importance of message and denier remain the same in Condition VI. Particular situational variable combinations produce the effects in this study, rather than one independent variable. We could postulate from this evidence that when conditions are the exact reverse of each other with levels of message and denier remaining the same within each condition, that similar effects are produced. This postulation will be discussed at greater length later in this chapter.

Repetition of initial communication was chosen as the most appropriate response to two different combinations of situational variables, or denial situations: (1) unimportant message and denier, private context; and (2) important message, unimportant denier, public context (Conditions II and V). The only similarity between these two conditions is that the denier is unimportant in both cases. Perhaps importance of message and level of context do not matter in these conditions. The threat inherent in repetition of initial communication (receiving a second denial) does not seem to influence choice of this response. Possibly only when the denier is perceived as important does a real threat of receiving another denial influence the victim's choice of an appropriate response.

Verbal attack was chosen as the most appropriate response for two different denial situations: (1) unimportant message, important denier, public context; and (2) important message, unimportant denier, private context (Conditions III and VII). No similarities exist between these

two conditions; however, subjects chose to "get even" in both situations. Condition VII is the exact reverse of Condition III; levels of each independent variable in Condition VII is the exact reverse of the same independent variable in Condition III. The combinations of these particular variables created the like effects in these two conditions. Both real-life examples included threats to the victim's self-image; perhaps when denial threatens self-image or self-concept, verbal attack is chosen as the most appropriate response to the denial.

Acceptance-withdrawal was chosen as the most appropriate response to three different combinations of situational variables, or denial situations: (1) important message and denier, private context; (2) unimportant message and denier, public context; and (3) unimportant message, important denier, and private context (Conditions I, IV, and VIII).

Levels of independent variables for Condition IV are the exact reverse of levels of independent variables in Condition I, and levels of message and denier are the same within both conditions. This same effect occurred with the combinations of independent variables in Conditions II and VI. These findings support the postulation that when levels of the independent variables in denial conditions reverse but remain the same within each condition, similar effects are produced by these combinations.

Both Conditions I and VIII include an important denier, and a private context. Acceptance-withdrawal is probably chosen as a response to these two conditions because the denier is perceived as important.

There appears to be much threat associated with choice of responses which would make another denial possible in the real-life examples (repetition and metacommunication). An evaluative, defensive communicative climate is present in each example.

Perhaps acceptance-withdrawal is chosen for Condition IV because of the unimportance of the message and denial. The key to explaining why acceptance-withdrawal was chosen for Conditions I, IV, and VIII, may be that subjects do not mind accepting the implication of the denial (that the victim is unworthy of communicating at that time on that topic with that person) when the communication situation is perceived as either very important or very unimportant.

Subjects did not choose, for any denial situation, metacommunication, attention-getting verbal escalation, physical escalation, or property damage, as being appropriate responses to communication denial. Perhaps metacommunication, or asking about the denial, is too direct an approach and involves too much risk or threat to the victim of denial. Attention-getting verbal escalation (crying, yelling, raising one's voice), or physical escalation (physically forcing the denier to listen and to respond) may be perceived as too degrading to the person who has to resort to such means. Property damage (damaging the denier's property in order to get a response) may be perceived as too violent a response to any of the communication denial situations; perhaps all of the physical responses are perceived by subjects as "irrational behavior," with the exception of physical attack, which was chosen for two denial situations as the most appropriate response.

## II. Discussion of Results for the Correlation Analyses.

Several of the eight responses were very highly correlated in a positive way. These high correlations suggest that subjects viewed the highly-correlated responses as being quite similar in type or nature.

Repetition and metacommunication were very highly and positively correlated. However, subjects did not choose metacommunication when they chose repetition as an appropriate response to communication denial. This would indicate that subjects do not, at least in practice, view the two responses as being exactly alike. If subjects perceived the two responses as similar, choice ratings for the two responses should be approximately the same.

Physical attack and property damage were also highly and positively correlated; however, property damage was not considered to be an appropriate response to denial, while physical attack was chosen as the most appropriate response to two situations of communication denial. Obviously these responses are not viewed as similar, either, despite high positive correlations.

Several responses were highly and negatively correlated, suggesting that these responses were viewed by subjects as dissimilar in type or nature. Repetition and withdrawal were highly negatively correlated; as well as metacommunication and withdrawal. Rules of logic suggest that if these two sets of responses are viewed as dissimilar, then repetition and metacommunication should also be highly negatively correlated. However, repetition and metacommunication were highly

positively correlated, so this line of reasoning is untenable, and a basic general principle appears to be unclear from these data.

### III. Discussion of Analysis of Variance Results.

Analysis of variance was the statistical method used to indicate what factors in this study accounted for significant differences. Analysis of variance was conducted for each of the eight responses to determine if different treatment conditions created different responses. The null hypothesis for this study was: Responses to situations of communication denial are the same regardless of levels of independent variables; i.e., different treatments create no significant differences in responses.

The level of significance chosen for rejection of the null hypothesis was  $p = .05$ . In most cases, analysis of variance data indicated that the null hypothesis could be rejected; i.e., different treatment conditions do create different effects. Following is a discussion of results for each response.

Repetition. No main effects were indicated for repetition of initial communication; however, a significant first-order interaction effect was indicated for the independent variables of message and denial. The Neuman-Kuells test for significance was administered, and this test indicated that none of the means for this interaction were significantly different from each other. However, a reversal of the pattern of effects was indicated. Means were equal when both levels of the two independent variables were the same (important



message - important denier, or unimportant message - unimportant denier). Means were also approximately equal when the levels of the two variables differed (important message - unimportant denier; unimportant message - important denier). Similarity of levels of the two independent variables caused this interactive effect between message and denier upon repetition as a response.

Metacommunication. No main effects were indicated for the response of metacommunication (asking about the denial). However, both first and second-order interaction effects were indicated for this response.

A significant first-order interaction effect was indicated between the independent variables of message and denier. The Neuman-Kuells test for significance indicated that no means within the interaction were significantly different from each other. However, a reversal of the pattern of effects was indicated. When both levels of the independent variables are the same, means are approximately equal (important message - important denier; unimportant message - unimportant denier). When levels of the independent variables are dissimilar, means are also approximately equal (important message - unimportant denier; unimportant message - important denier). Thus, similarity of levels of independent variables also causes the first-order interaction effect for metacommunication as a response.

A significant second-order interaction for metacommunication was indicated for all three independent variables of message, denier, and context. The Neuman-Kuells test for significance did indicate that means differed significantly from each other. Means in the private

context did not differ significantly from each other; however, means in the public context did. The public level of the contextual independent variable seems to cause the interactive effects for metacommunication. Means also differed significantly in the public context when levels of the independent variables are the same, as compared to when levels are dissimilar. It appears that interactive effects are caused by the particular combinations of levels of the independent variables, rather than the effects being caused by one certain independent variable. Combinations of situational variables are the key to understanding the second-order interactive effect for metacommunication.

Acceptance-Withdrawal. No main effects were indicated for acceptance-withdrawal (cessation of communicative attempts; acceptance of the implication of denial, i.e., that the victim is unworthy of communicating at that time on that topic with that person). However, both first and second-order interactive effects were indicated for this response.

A significant first-order interaction effect occurred between the independent variables of message and context. The Neuman-Kuells test for significance was applied to test means for significant differences; one mean was significantly different from others. This difference occurs when the message is unimportant and the context is public. This mean differed significantly from the mean for an important message and public context. Obviously the level of the independent variable message importance creates the significant difference, since levels of the contextual variable are the same. Means do not differ

significantly in the private context; thus, importance of the message is significant only in a public context for this interaction effect. A reversal of the pattern of effects also occurs; when both levels of the independent variables of message and context are dissimilar, and the levels of each independent variable are reversed, means are approximately equal (important message - private context; unimportant message - public context). Dissimilarity of levels of the independent variables appear to be the key factor in influencing this interaction effect, as well as importance of the message in public contexts.

The second-order interaction effect for acceptance-withdrawal occurred among all three independent variables; message, denier, and context. Only one mean appeared significantly different from others when the Neuman-Kuells test for significance was applied; this was the mean for an unimportant message and denier and private context. This mean differed significantly from two other means; those for:

- (1) unimportant message, important denier, and private context; and
- (2) important message, unimportant denier, and private context.

The mean for the first condition (unimportant message, important denier, private context) differs because of the levels of the denier variable (message and contextual variable levels are the same in both conditions). The mean for the second condition (important message, unimportant denier, private context) differs because of the message variable (denier and contextual variable levels are the same in both conditions). However, the level of the contextual variable (private context) remains constant in all three conditions. Means are higher

in public contexts than in private context, with the one exception of the significantly different mean (unimportant message and denier, private context). It appears, again, that particular combinations of particular levels of the independent variables are what create interactive effects for the response of acceptance-withdrawal; all three independent variables combine to create second-order interaction effects for this response.

Verbal Escalation. A main effect for verbal escalation was indicated; the independent variable of denier created this main effect. All means which included an important denier were higher than those including an unimportant denier; thus, the level of importance of the denier tends to influence directly the response of verbal escalation.

Verbal Attack and Physical Escalation. No main effects nor interactions were indicated for verbal attack or physical escalation; thus, the since no significant differences appeared, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected for these two responses. Different combinations of levels of independent variables make no difference in effects for these two responses.

Physical Attack and Property Damage. These two responses were excluded from analysis of variance for several reasons: (1) when raw scores were analyzed for variance, it was found that in all cases, these two responses received ratings of one throughout the inventory.<sup>1</sup> This indicates that these are not used responses; they are rejected in every case by most subjects; and (2) an almost-perfect

relationship was indicated between the two responses by correlation data. It was thought that because these responses were never used, and because they are viewed by subjects as being the same, that there was little point to analyzing either response with analysis of variance.

#### IV. Summary of Results.

Histogram results indicated that the responses of personal attack, repetition of initial communication, verbal attack, and acceptance-withdrawal were the responses chosen as appropriate to different situations of communication denial. Analysis of variance results indicated either main effects, first and/or second-order interaction effects for the following responses: repetition of initial communication, metacommunication, acceptance-withdrawal, and verbal escalation. Overall results indicate that the responses chosen most often as appropriate to different situations of communication denial are: repetition, metacommunication, acceptance-withdrawal, verbal escalation, verbal attack, and personal attack. It appears that responses are chosen because of particular combinations of levels of independent variables rather than only one variable. Response effects are due to these specific and particular combinations.

### V. Implications of the Study.

Although no overall generalizations could be obtained from results of this study regarding response choice for situations of communication denial, implications of the rejection of the null hypothesis are far-reaching. Different combinations of the levels of the three independent variables (message, denier, and context) create different responses to communication denial. Results indicated that the three independent variables do make a difference in communication denial experiences, and further, that respective levels and combinations of these levels of the independent variables also make a difference.

The specific goals of this study were to: (1) identify which responses are considered appropriate to varying situations of communication denial by the average undergraduate student; (2) identify the major dimensions of the experience of communication denial; (3) identify which variables make a difference (cause the situation to be perceived as containing elements of denial) in communication denial experiences. These goals have been met with the completion of this study; the average college student considers: repetition of initial communication, acceptance-withdrawal, verbal attack, and personal attack as appropriate responses to situations of communication denial. Which response is selected depends upon the particular denial situation, the combination of the different levels of the different independent variables. No matter what the denial situation, or the variables included, the average undergraduate does not consider physical escalation nor property damage as appropriate responses. Responses

range from mild (repetition, acceptance-withdrawal) to violent (verbal and personal attack).

The major dimensions of the experience of communication denial have also been identified. These dimensions central to perception of denial include: the message (important or unimportant); the denier (important or unimportant); and the context (public or private). Since different combinations of the levels of these three variables make a difference in selection of all responses excepting physical escalation and property damage, they must appear to contribute heavily to perception of the experience of communication denial. Other variables may also influence perception, but it appears that the message, the denier, and the context are significant factors in denial experiences. The different forms of communication denial have been discussed in Chapter I; however, it appears that form does not make much difference in responding to the denial itself.

Variables which make a difference were identified for the responses of repetition, metacommunication, acceptance-withdrawal, and verbal escalation. These variables did not appear to elicit similar effects for verbal attack or physical escalation. Please see the first part of Chapter III for these specific variables.

Overall results indicate that the average college undergraduate does not often respond to the experience of communication denial directly, i.e., by asking about the denial. Perhaps this response is too direct and involves too much risk for the victim of denial; asking about the denial creates the opportunity for the denier to deny the victim yet again. Giffin (1968, p. 8) has discussed the fact that

persons in a weaker position rarely attempt a direct communication about the denial because of threat. Subjects particularly avoided this response in any denial situation in which the denier was perceived as important, or in situations where the relationship appeared "superior-subordinate," for example, the boss-employee relationship. This type of relationship is generally conducive to establishment of a defensive communicative climate, magnifying risk of asking about a denial. Research has shown that the amount of group discussion is smaller in an authoritative, evaluative communicative climate than in a democratic, empathic communicative climate (Giffin and Patton, 1971).

The overall response pattern of subjects to situations included in the Communication Denial Response Inventory indicates the Bion's "fight-flight" theory of responsiveness may be relevant (Bion, 1962). It may be postulated that repetition is the first and most logical approach to eliminating communication denial experiences. If this response fails to obtain a normal communicative response from the denier, subjects may move to use of acceptance-withdrawal, or cessation of communicative attempts and accepting the implication of denial (that the victim of denial is not worthy of communicating on that subject at that time with that person). From the present study one can only postulate that the "fight-flight" pattern is operating; the Communication Denial Response Inventory does not indicate which response a subject would choose first, which he would choose second, etc. The inventory does indicate choice intensity for each response

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for each condition. However, if the "fight-flight" theory is acceptable, implications are quite serious and worth investigation.

The "fight-flight" pattern in communicative interaction (see Chapters I and II for further discussion) has been identified as a pattern in developing social and psychological alienation. Giffin and Groginsky (1970) define social alienation as "referring to a person who withdraws from or avoids interaction with another person or persons, and functionally accepts the conclusion that he cannot communicate. . . (p. 4)." Social alienation is a bit different from psychological alienation; the difference is more of degree than of type. Psychological alienation occurs when a person rejects his own feelings and distorts perceptions of reality. However, in this study, we are concerned with the socially alienated person, i.e., the person who functionally accepts the conclusion that he cannot communicate with another person or persons and who withdraws from or avoids interaction with that person or persons. We might note that in some cases this conclusion (the acceptance of the implication of the denial) is not always illogical; it may, after repeated denials, be quite logical.

It may be further postulated that subjects pick mild responses first in response to denial (repetition, metacommunication, etc.), and, if these responses are not successful in obtaining normal communicative responses, subjects pick violent responses (personal attack, verbal attack, etc.). If these violent responses produce no results, subjects then select acceptance-withdrawal as the most appropriate way to deal with repeated denials. However, acceptance involves acceptance of the implication of the denial (I am not worthy

of communicating with this person on this subject at this time). One or two situations in which the victim of denial chooses to accept this implication may not produce serious results; however, many situations could distort the victim's perception of all incoming communicative signals. Many persons feel inferior to people with better speech, dress, education, influence, confidence, or poise; acceptance of the implication of denial is not an isolated occurrence. The "alienated generation" is not restricted to the under-thirty age group usually identified as alienated. Mrs. Jones, who cannot converse with her rich next-door neighbor who laughs at Mrs. Jones' Southern dialect, is also alienated. Assuming that subjects in this study did follow "fight-flight" response patterns, and that the "flight" phase of the pattern involves the response of acceptance-withdrawal, let us further pursue the implications of possible social alienation for our victims of communication denial.

Several factors have been identified in previous research as major components of alienation. These include "powerlessness," or a person's feeling of loss of effective control of his environment, and "normlessness," which involves "purposelessness (lack of a sense of values to give meaning to life), and "norm conflict" (a person incorporates conflicting standards into his personality) (Dean, 1957). McClosky and Achaar (1965) have identified cognitive and emotional incapacity as contributing to cognitive incapacity (p. 21), and name this general incapacity "anomie." They concluded that "these personality dispositions reduce their (the individual's) chance for effective interaction and communication (p. 221)." Thus, Dean,

McClosky and Schaar, and Giffin feel that lack of communication is indeed a major cause of social alienation, but do not attribute this communication lack to a personality trait, but to situation-induced problems. In generally, studies of social alienation suggest that the alienated person perceives himself as isolated from others and is confused about lack of communication.

If we infer that because subjects in this study chose acceptance-withdrawal for almost half of the communication denial situations, that they are to some degree socially alienated, the relationship of the two concepts becomes most important. Giffin and Groginsky (1970) suggested in a prior study a possible causal relationship between communication denial and social alienation. This study would appear to support their conclusions. In their words, "the important socio-communicative implication is that an individual who feels he has experienced a great amount of communication denial from a significant other person will no longer believe that existing channels of communication for them are effective (p. 22)."

Another important inference is suggested in view of the large numbers of subjects choosing acceptance-withdrawal for over half the denial situations. The question of personal validity is implied with every statement a person makes, or with every communication he initiates. The implied request "Please validate me" is inherent in every word a person utters. If a person is consistently faced with communication denial when he attempts communicative interaction (particularly by significant others) he will logically deduce that communication is not worthwhile for him. Previous clinical studies (see Chapter I)

have suggested that this is the precise conclusion reached by most schizophrenics. Communication could even be a causal factor in the development of mental illnesses such as schizophrenia. (Please see Chapter I for further explanation of previous research in this area). Laing (1961) has produced evidence that consistent and continued denial of a child by the parents can create damaging effects; he mentions that a characteristic family pattern of schizophrenics is indicating a child whose authenticity (or self-concept) has been persistently mutilated, often unwittingly. LaFore (1945) supports Laing's conclusions. Buber (1957) mentions that the basis of every man's life is to be confirmed, and to confirm others. Mary Heider's research in suppression of communication also indicates that communication denial can create damaging effects in children (Heider, 1968).

Studies done by Giffin (1970) of students experiencing high degrees of speech anxiety have produced a speech anxiety syndrome for students exhibiting tendencies to avoid or withdraw from interaction situations. These students are significantly different from students (average) in terms of a lower self-image, a lower degree of trust of others, a higher motivation to avoid failure and a lower motivation to achieve success. These students have experienced a higher degree of childhood suppression of communication and a significantly greater than average degree of communication denial from persons held to be important. All of these factors point to a high degree of social alienation (Giffin, 1970).

In summary, previous studies indicate that communication denial may be significantly related to speech anxiety, social alienation, and schizophrenia. Aside from these indications, persons subjected to continued denial must suffer ill effects. A person whose authenticity is consistently subjected to doubt must fight very hard to retain a positive self-concept and self-image. Most persons feel that when they communicate that they deserve a response of some sort. A person who constantly has to reconcile and repair a deficient self-image cannot be expected to communicate as clearly as he might want to. In other words, denial may be related to speech anxiety, social alienation, and schizophrenia, but, in addition to these possibilities, coping with denial is not simple.

If we assume that denial is related to speech anxiety, social alienation, and schizophrenia, as well as being embarrassing and uncomfortable for the victim, results of this study are far-reaching in many areas of social science. Parents, teachers, authority figures, and persons yielding degrees of power, as well as social scientists, should be especially cognizant of the possibility that consistent communication denial can wreak damaging effects. If attempts are made to deal with the "violent" responses of contemporary America, it is necessary to first understand why responses used are "violent." This study may help to find this out. Results of this study indicate that further research to establish causes, effects, and directions of communication denial is a necessity. Results of this study suggest no causal relationships, rather, possibilities for the experience of communication denial. Realizing which responses are used to different

situations of communication denial is only one step. Hopefully other researchers will realize the importance of further studies in the area of communication denial, and, its importance to daily communication situations, as well as more pathological complications.

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## APPENDIX A

## COMMUNICATION DENIAL RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE

Your help is needed to assist me in developing an instrument which will measure common behavioral responses to communication denial. I have described sixteen different situations which I feel are illustrative of common communication denial situations. There are eight different variable combinations for each eight different communication conditions and two examples for each different communication condition. The three main variables appearing in each situation are the message, the denier (the person who ignores the initial communication), and the context. I need your help in gauging the importance of each of the three variables in each different example. The message variable varies from important to unimportant; the denier variable ranges from important to unimportant; and the context variable ranges from public to private. For instance, do you feel that the message in #1 is important, the denier unimportant, and the context public? What I need to know is how the importance of each variable will appear to the average Speech IA or IB student, all examples are geared to these students. Please indicate how you see the importance-unimportance of the message and denier and the type of context (public or private) in each example in the blanks provided. Also, please indicate any changes which you feel would make the situations most clear and relevant to subjects. For example, in Example #1, you would write in the blanks either important or unimportant for the message and denier and public or private for the context. Thanks for your help!

1. You approach your professor after class and ask him if he would speak with you about your current grades in the class. You want to improve your grade, so this question and the professor's answer are important to you. He looks at you, scowls, and tells you he doesn't have time. He walks away in a hurry.

Message\_\_\_\_\_ Denier\_\_\_\_\_ Context\_\_\_\_\_

2. You see a familiar face while you are walking to class. You say hello although you are not sure that this person remembers you. Neither the message nor the person are particularly important to you; you were just being friendly. This person ignores you.

Message\_\_\_\_\_ Denier\_\_\_\_\_ Context\_\_\_\_\_

3. You are in a new class and this is your first meeting. You know only one person and you yell "Hello" across the room. The message was not important but your acquaintance is. He acts like he does not know who you are; while this is happening the whole group is watching.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

4. You are in an unfamiliar city and stop at a gas station to ask directions to a certain motel. The attendant ignores your question, telling you to find it yourself. The attendant is not important to you, but your message is, since you need this information quickly in order to hold your motel reservation.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

5. You see a group of people in a car and you wave and honk at them. These people are not especially important to you, and your message is not really important either, but they ignore you although you know they saw you wave and honk.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

6. You are supposed to relay a message to a friend who does not have a telephone. You see his roommate and ask him to give your friend the message. He tells you to do it yourself. Your message is quite important but your friend's roommate is not important to you.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

7. You have a parttime job and are interested in finding out how your boss views your work. You ask him and he answers you with "What do you think?" He then leaves the room. This question and answer are quite important to you because you want to cooperate and do your best work.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

8. The chancellor at your university has called an all-student convocation to discuss a strike over Vietnam and how the strike will affect finals. The actual question is if the university will close or not on account of the strike. He tells the student body that he will allow no strike, and he leaves, allowing no questioning. This question and answer are quite important to you, as well as the supposed discussion about student wishes.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

9. You see an old professor of yours while walking to class and you ask him how he is. Neither message nor person hold much importance to you; however, he does not answer, telling you that you still look like the same person you did when you took his class.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

10. You see a former roommate of yours and say hello. Although you have been separated a long time, he/she is still important to you although your message is rather inconsequential. He/she ignores you, and you know that he/she cannot have forgotten who you are.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

11. You are sitting around a table with some friends, talking. You look at a person who is important to you and roll your eyes at something someone said. This nonverbal message is not especially important to you, but he acts as if he didn't see your gesture and goes on talking to the person next to him, ignoring your message.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

12. You are drinking beer in a local tavern and the person next to you sticks his elbow in your ribs. Neither person nor message are particularly important to you; you ask him to please move his elbow. He gives you a disgusted look and does not move his elbow or respond further to you.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

13. You are in the City Hall trying to find out where the office is to pay your license tag fee. You go into the Treasurer's secretary's office and ask her where to go. She tells you to find someone else and ask them; she is busy. Although the secretary is not important to you, your message is important, and you need this information quickly.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

14. You just started a new job and you are anxious to please your boss; what he thinks of you is important to you. You deliver a message to him that he is to call Mrs. Jones. The message is not important to you, but your boss is. He ignores your presence completely, and leafs through some papers without acknowledging you.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

15. You are eating with a group of friends in your dorm cafeteria. The food is terrible, and you ask a girl working behind the counter if something couldn't be done about the food. Your message is important, but the girl is not particularly important to you. She tells you to talk to the manager if you don't like the food. Your friends are watching this exchange.

Message\_\_\_\_\_Denier\_\_\_\_\_Context\_\_\_\_\_

16. You have enrolled in a graduate-level seminar although you are only a junior. What the professor and other students think of you is quite important to you; you want to convince them that you are capable of graduate-level work in spite of your age. You ask the professor a question about a discussion; you consider the question pertinent and well-thought-out. You would also like your question answered. The professor looks at you and turns to the class with a smirk and raised eyebrows. The class snickers. He points to another student without acknowledging your question.

Message \_\_\_\_\_ Denier \_\_\_\_\_ Context \_\_\_\_\_

## PILOT STUDY RESULTS

	Message		Denier		Context		Total
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Item 1	9	1	9	1	10	0	93%*
Item 2	10	0	9	1	3	7	73%
Item 3	8	2	9	1	9	1	87%*
Item 4	9	1	7	3	7	3	77%
Item 5	10	0	7	3	8	2	83%*
Item 6	10	0	7	3	8	2	83%*
Item 7	9	1	9	1	9	1	90%*
Item 8	10	0	10	0	10	0	100%*
Item 9	9	1	7	3	7	3	77%
Item 10	9	1	10	0	8	2	90%*
Item 11	10	0	7	3	7	3	80%
Item 12	7	3	8	2	5	5	67%
Item 13	10	0	8	2	7	3	83%*
Item 14	8	2	8	2	9	1	83%*
Item 15	7	3	10	0	10	0	90%*
Item 16	8	2	8	2	10	0	87%*

\*Indicates items chosen for CDRI on the basis of more than 80% agreement.

## APPENDIX B

## COMMUNICATION DENIAL RESPONSE INVENTORY

K.U.I.D. # \_\_\_\_\_ Class: Freshman \_\_\_ Sophomore \_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_ Senior \_\_\_  
 Sex: Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTIONS: In the following exercises, you will be asked to report your usual communication behavior in a variety of communication situations which include the element of communication denial. Communication denial occurs when one or more persons is involved in an interaction with one or more persons. Someone initiates communication and the other person/persons ignore or refuse to acknowledge the initiated communication. For example, you might ask your researcher to provide additional time to complete this scale. If he ignores your question, you have met with communication denial. However, if he merely disagrees, communication denial has not occurred; denial is a refusal to acknowledge your communication. The situations including communication denial included on this scale will be similar to many situations you have encountered in your previous experiences. If there are any conditions you have not experienced, report your likely behavior in the circumstances described--report what you would probably do.

In the communication conditions presented, it will be necessary for you to envision a number of situations with various characteristics. For example, you will need to picture yourself in a private or public communication context. The private context is when you are engaged in communication with only one other person (in some instances you might be communicating in a public place such as a restaurant, but as long as no more than one person is part of your communication interaction, your communication is still private). In the public context you engage in communication interaction with more than one person.

You will also need to envision situations in which your message (what you communicate, verbally or nonverbally) is both important and unimportant to you. Likewise, there are situations in which the person/persons you direct your communication to (the denier/deniers) is both important and unimportant to you. An example of an important message might be a statement such as "I love you;" an unimportant message might consist of "Hello." An important person is usually familiar with you--your boyfriend, girlfriend, parents, etc. An unimportant person is probably not familiar to you--a waitress, people you do not know, etc.

On the following pages, envision the communication condition described at the top of each page. For example, envision a situation in which both the message and the denier are important to you and the context is private. For each different set of communication conditions (eight altogether)



is included one example which should illustrate the conditions described at the top of each page. These examples are found on two separate pages, together with a heading which corresponds to each of the eight pages. Below each condition on each of the eight pages is a response scale consisting of eight different responses; respond to your idea of the communication conditions, not necessarily to the examples, although you may respond to the examples if you need a specific guideline to visualizing the communication condition. However, remember that the examples are merely guidelines; I would rather you responded to your own idea of the communication conditions rather than to the examples. Place a check on each response scale describing the extent to which you do or do not engage in such behaviors described when you are in the specific communication condition described at the top of each page. Remember to mark each response for each set of communication conditions. Please respond to all possible behaviors on the response scale for each of the eight communication conditions. If you cannot visualize a particular condition or do not know what you would do in a particular situation, mark in terms of what you would probably do and use the example as a guide to visualizing the condition. If you feel that the particular situation you have visualized is unique in terms of average student behavior, or very important to you, please briefly describe that situation on the back of the sheet which described that set of communication conditions; all information is confidential.

Work at fairly high speed through this assignment. Do not puzzle over individual conditions; it is your first response to the conditions that is desired. On the other hand, please do not be careless, your true report of communication behavior is desired.

- I. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE
- II. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE
- III. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP
- IV. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP
- V. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP
- VI. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP
- VII. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE
- VIII. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE

EXPLANATION OF RESPONSES: A brief explanation of each response may be helpful before you begin. The first response is repeating your initial communication, attempting again to gain a response (repetition). The second response is trying to find out why your communication was ignored by asking about the denial (metacommunication). The third response is ceasing your communication attempts, accepting the fact that you cannot communicate at that time with that person on that topic (acceptance). The fourth response is raising your voice, crying, or yelling, in order to get the denier's attention to get a response (attention-getting verbal escalation). Fifth is "getting even" by insults, name-calling, or sarcasm (face-saving verbal escalation). Sixth is physically forcing the denier to listen and respond to you (physical escalation). This is not personal violence or physical attack; for instance, you might move between the denier and the television screen, turn the television off, or shake his arm to get him to listen. The seventh response is physically attacking the denier in order to get a response (physical attack). The last response is damaging the denier's property in order to get a response (property damage). Violence such as riot behavior, rock-throwing, or defacing property are examples of property damage; this response also includes more personal, directed acts of violence, such as breaking the denier's television set or shooting someone. Look at the example on the next page and complete the inventory.

#### EXAMPLE FOR ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE:

You have enrolled in a graduate-level seminar although you are only a junior. What the professor thinks of you is quite important to you, as is the other students' opinions. You want to convince them that you are capable of graduate-level work in spite of your age. You ask the professor a question about a discussion; you consider the question pertinent and well-thought-out. You would also like your question answered. The professor looks at you and turns to the class with raised eyebrows and a smirk. The class snickers. He points to another student without acknowledging your question. What would you do?

(Go on to the next page for the response scale)

## I. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE

You approach your professor after class and ask him if you could speak to him about your current grades in the class. You want to improve your grade, so this question and his answer are important to you. He looks at you, scowls, and tells you he doesn't have time. He walks away in a hurry. What would you do?

## II. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE

You see a familiar face in a restaurant. You had planned to eat alone, but you go over to his booth to eat. You sit down and say hello although you are not sure that this person remembers you. Neither the message nor the person are particularly important to you; you just wanted some company. When you say hello, this person ignores you. What would you do?

## III. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP

You are in a new class and this is your first meeting. You know only one person and you yell "Hello" across the room. The message is not important to you but your acquaintance is. He acts like he doesn't know who you are; while this is happening the whole group is watching. What would you do?

## IV. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP

You see a group of people in a car and you wave and honk at them. These people are not especially important to you, and your message is not really important, either, but they ignore you although you know they saw you wave and honk. What would you do?

## V. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP

You are eating with a group of friends in your dorm cafeteria. The food is terrible, and you ask a girl working behind the counter if something couldn't be done about the food. Your message is important but the girl is not particularly important to you. She tells you to talk to the manager if you don't like the food. While this is happening your friends are watching. What would you do?

## VI. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP

The chancellor at your university has called an all-student convocation to discuss a strike over Vietnam and how the strike will affect finals. The actual question is if the university will close or not on account of the strike. He tells you (the student body) that he will allow no strike and that classes will proceed as usual, and he leaves the convocation, allowing no questioning. This question and answer are quite important to you, as well as the supposed discussion about student wishes. Since the chancellor will ultimately control the final decision, he is also important to you. What would you do?

## VII. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE

You are in the City Hall trying to find out where to go to pay your license tag fee. You go into the Treasurer's secretary's office and ask the secretary where to go. She tells you to find someone else and ask them; she is busy. Although the secretary is not important to you, your message is because you need this information quickly. What would you do?

## VIII. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE

You just started a new job and you are anxious to please your boss; what he thinks of you is important to you. You deliver a message to him that he is to call Mrs. Jones. The message is not important to you but your boss is. He ignores you completely and leafs through some papers without acknowledging your presence. What would you do?

## I. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE

Ia. Attempt again to get a response by repeating your initial communication.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ib. Ask why your communication was ignored.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ic. Stop trying to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Id. Raise your voice, cry, or yell.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ie. Call names, insult, or be sarcastic.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

If. Physically attempt to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ig. Physically attack the denier.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ih. Damage the denier's property.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

II. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE

Ia. Attempt again to get a response by repeating your initial communication.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ib. Ask why your communication was ignored.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ic. Stop trying to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Id. Raise your voice, cry, or yell.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ie. Call names, insult, or be sarcastic.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

If. Physically attempt to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ig. Physically attack the denier.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ih. Damage the denier's property.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

## III. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP

Ia. Attempt again to get a response by repeating your initial communication.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ib. Ask why your communication was ignored.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ic. Stop trying to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Id. Raise your voice, cry, or yell.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ie. Call names, insult, or be sarcastic.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

If. Physically attempt to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ig. Physically attack the denier.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

Ih. Damage the denier's property.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not



## IV. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP

Ia. Attempt again to get a response by repeating your initial communication.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ib. Ask why your communication was ignored.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ic. Stop trying to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Id. Raise your voice, cry, or yell.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ie. Call names, insult, or be sarcastic.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

If. Physically attempt to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ig. Physically attack the denier.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ih. Damage the denier's property.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

## V. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP

Ia. Attempt again to get a response by repeating your initial communication.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ib. Ask why your communication was ignored.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ic. Stop trying to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Id. Raise your voice, cry, or yell.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ie. Call names, insult, or be sarcastic.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

If. Physically attempt to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ig. Physically attack the denier.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

Ih. Damage the denier's property.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

## VI. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-GROUP

- Ia. Attempt again to get a response by repeating your initial communication.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally		I generally
do		do not

- Ib. Ask why your communication was ignored.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally		I generally
do		do not

- Ic. Stop trying to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally		I generally
do		do not

- Id. Raise your voice, cry, or yell.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally		I generally
do		do not

- Ie. Call names, insult, or be sarcastic.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally		I generally
do		do not

- If. Physically attempt to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally		I generally
do		do not

- Ig. Physically attack the denier.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally		I generally
do		do not

- Ih. Damage the denier's property.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally		I generally
do		do not

## VII. MESSAGE-IMPORTANT; DENIER-UNIMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE

- Ia. Attempt again to get a response by repeating your initial communication.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

- Ib. Ask why your communication was ignored.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

- Ic. Stop trying to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

- Id. Raise your voice, cry, or yell.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

- Ie. Call names, insult, or be sarcastic.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

- If. Physically attempt to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

- Ig. Physically attack the denier.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

- Ih. Damage the denier's property.

:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:	:_____:
I generally				I generally
do				do not

## VIII. MESSAGE-UNIMPORTANT; DENIER-IMPORTANT; CONTEXT-PRIVATE

- Ia. Attempt again to get a response by repeating your initial communication.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

- Ib. Ask why your communication was ignored.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

- Ic. Stop trying to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

- Id. Raise your voice, cry, or yell.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

- Ie. Call names, insult, or be sarcastic.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

- If. Physically attempt to get a response.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

- Ig. Physically attack the denier.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not

- Ih. Damage the denier's property.

:_____:	:_____:
I generally	I generally
do	do not